INTRODUCTION TO DA‘WAH

The Arabic term *da‘wah* is derived from the verb دَعَا *da‘aa* which means “to call; to invite; and to supplicate, i.e. to call on God”. It is used to refer to the act of conveying or calling people to the message of Islaam. In that context it is a contraction of the phase *ad-da‘wah ilallaah* (calling to Allaah).

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُواْ إِلَى اللهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ

“Say: This is my way and I invite to Allaah with certain knowledge ...”
(*Soorah Yoosuf,* 12: 108)

Virtues of Da‘wah

Da‘wah was the basic mission of the prophets of God. They were raised up among their respective people to call them to the worship of Allaah alone and to abandon the worship of the various false gods that they had invented.

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولاً أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ

“I have sent to every nation a messenger [proclaiming:] Worship Allaah and avoid the [worship of] false gods.” *Soorah an-Nahl,* (16): 36

There are numerous verses in the Qur’aan which describe how the former prophets invited their people to Allaah. These stories serve as examples to the last Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers. Furthermore, there are a number of other verses in which Allaah specifically exhorts the Prophet (ﷺ) to convey the message of Islaam to people.

وَادْعُ إِلَى رَبِّكَ وَلاَ تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Call to your Lord and do not be among the pagans.”
Soorah al-Qasas, (28): 87

Consequently, Allaah praises those who engage in this noble endeavor as being the best in speech.

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلاً مِمَّنْ دَعَآ إِلَى اللهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

“Who is better in speech than one who calls to Allaah, does righteous deeds and says indeed I am among the Muslims.” *Soorah Fussilat,* (41): 33

The best words that any human being can speak are words of guidance inviting people to the purpose of their creation; the worship of God. This being the case, the reward for giving *da‘wah* must be tremendous. Thus, it is no surprise to find that the Prophet (ﷺ) addressed the great reward for this righteous pursuit saying,

((مَنْ دَلَّ عَلَى خَيْرٍ فَلَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ فَاعِلِهِ)).

“*Whoever directs someone to do good will gain the same reward as the one who does good.*”[1]

He was also reported to have said,

((مَنْ دَعَا إِلَى هُدىً كَانَ لَهُ مِنَ ٱلأَجْرِ مِثْلُ أُجُورِ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ لاَ يَنْقُصُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ أُجُورِهِمْ

[1] *Sahih Muslim,* vol. 3, p. 1050, no. 4665.

شيْئًا)).

"*Whoever calls to guidance will receive the same reward as the one who follows him without any decrease in the reward of [his follower].*"[2]

As a show of divine grace, Allaah has promised that every good deed would be rewarded tenfold and more.[3] According to the Prophet (ﷺ), one who guides others to do good deeds gets a reward equivalent to their reward for doing good. Consequently, people guided to righteousness earn, throughout their lives, good deeds for those who guided them. Such an immeasurable reward is specifically granted to those involved in the prophetic mission of *da'wah*.

As an illustration of the magnitude of the reward for guiding others to Islaam, the Prophet (ﷺ) was also reported by Sahl ibn Sa'd as saying:

((لَأَنْ يَهْدِيَ اللَّهُ بِكَ رَجُلاً خَيْرٌ لَكَ مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَكَ حُمْرُ النَّعَمِ)).

"*For Allaah to guide someone by your hand is better for you than having red camels.*"[4]

Camels were considered the most valuable property in ancient Arabia and the red variety was the most prized of all. Consequently, the Prophet (ﷺ) here indicates that guiding others to the truth is worth more than our most prized possessions in this world. This fact is further reiterated in Chapter al-'Asr where Allaah declares humankind in a state of loss with the exception of **"those who advise each other with truth."**[5]

Allaah also hinged the label of honor, "best of humankind," granted to the Muslim nation on the fulfillment of their *da'wah*-duty of calling humankind to righteousness and prohibiting sin among them.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللهِ

"You are the best nation raised up for humankind. You enjoin righteousness, forbid corruption and you believe in Allaah." *Soorah aal-Imraan*, (3): 110

Thus, the Muslim nation has been given the status of the best nation because of their belief in Allaah, their promotion of morality and their opposition to vice. If they fail to believe in Allaah by applying the *Sharee'ah* in their governments and promote vice by permitting *ribaa* based economies, the production of alcohol, and the spread of lewdness, they may sink below the worst of disbelieving nations. Consequently, Muslim nations top the list of the most corrupt nations on earth today. Muslim students in Bangla Desh riot annually for the right to cheat in their exams.

Obligation of Da'wah

Calling to Allaah is generally considered by scholars of Islaam as an obligation on every Muslim according to their abilities. It has been instructed by Allaah in the Qur'aan and by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in his *Sunnah*. With regard to its obligation, Sh. Ibn Baaz said the following:

> "*Da'wah* is an obligation on everyone who has the ability, from scholars to Muslim rulers

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[2] *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, p. 1406, no. 6470.

[3] *Soorah al-An'aam*, 6: 160.

[4] *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 4, pp. 156-7, no. 253.

[5] *Soorah al-'Asr*, 103: 3.

> and missionaries, until the message of Islaam reaches every corner of the earth in the various languages of the people. This is the type of propagation that Allaah has commanded. He, Most High, instructed His Prophet (ﷺ) [to disseminate the message of Islaam as follows]:
>
> يَأَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَآ أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ
>
> **“O Messenger, convey what was revealed from your Lord.”**
> (*Soorah al-Maa’idah,* 5: 67)
>
> Thus, it was obligatory on the Messenger (ﷺ) to deliver the message in the same way that it was obligatory on all the messengers of God – peace and blessings of Allaah upon them and upon all who follow them in conveying the message.
>
> …Therefore, it is obligatory on the whole nation, from rulers and scholars to businessmen and others to convey this religion from Allaah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and explain it to people in their various languages.”[6]

However, scholars have made a distinction between the individual obligation of *da‘wah* and the community obligation. Sh. Ibn Baaz stated the following:

> There are two levels of *Da‘wah* to *Allaah*: The first is *Fard ‘ayn* (an individual obligatory duty) and the second is *Fard kifaayah* (a collective obligatory duty). It is *Fard ‘ayn* on you when no one in [your] country, region or tribe takes up the responsibility of enjoining good and forbidding evil, if you have knowledge. It becomes obligatory on you specifically to give *da‘wah,* to enlighten people to the rights of Allaah, to command what is good and prohibit evil. However, if there are present those who give *da‘wah* teach people and guide them, then it would be *sunnah* and not obligatory for others who also have knowledge of the *Sharee‘ah.*[7]

Regarding the obligation of *da‘wah* in this age, Sh. Ibn Baaz also said:

> “At a time when there is a shortage of callers, when evil is prevalent and ignorance dominates, *da‘wah* becomes *fard ‘ayn* on everyone according to their ability.”[8]

Proof for the community obligation of *da‘wah* can be found in the following verse and others similar to it:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“Let there arise among you a group inviting to all that is good, enjoining righteousness and forbidding evil. Those are the successful ones.”
(*Soorah Aal ‘Imraan,* 3: 104)

Allaah states that a group of the believers should shoulder the responsibility of promoting virtue and prohibiting vice in the society. Because religion is not merely a personal affair as perceived in the secular West, it forms the very fabric of society. Policing the society should not be left up to the government alone but should be shared by members of the communities which constitute the society.

On the other hand, the individual obligation of *da‘wah* can be seen indicated in the following verse:

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[6] *Words of Advice Regarding Da’wah,* pp. 47-8.
[7] *Words of Advice Regarding Da’wah,* p. 18.
[8] Ibid., p. 20.

اُدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ

"Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good preaching."
(*Soorah an-Nahl*, 16: 125)

The Prophet (ﷺ) is personally addressed in this verse and by extension all individual believers are instructed to invite people to Islaam. In case this instruction was perceived as limited to only certain individuals like scholars or groups, the Prophet (ﷺ) himself broadened the scope of responsibility by making it the individual responsibility of everyone who had any knowledge saying:

((بَلِّغُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً)).

"*Convey from me, even if it be only a single verse.*"[9]

Every Muslim must learn some verses or chapters of the Qur'aan for their daily prayers. Among the shortest and most popular chapters is *Soorah al-Ikhlaas* which states: **"Say: He is Allaah the Unique, Allaah the Self-subsistent. He did not give birth nor was He born. And nothing is similar to Him."** Every one of these verses contains a crucial message about Allaah about which most religions are ignorant. Each verse clearly distinguishes God, the Creator, from His creatures. The vast majority of Muslims knows this short chapter and can share its messages to the idolatrous world around them. Consequently, virtually no one is excused from giving some *da'wah*.

Furthermore, whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) addressed people, he used to say:

((لِيُبَلِّغِ الشَّاهِدُ الْغَائِبَ فَإِنَّ الشَّاهِدَ عَسَى أَنْ يُبَلِّغَ مَنْ هُوَ أَوْعَى لَهُ مِنْهُ)).

"*Let those present convey what they heard to those absent. For, perhaps he may inform one better able to understand it than him.*"[10]

Allaah's Curse

In order to stress the gravity of *da'wah* as a duty on Muslims, Allaah warned those who did not fulfill their responsibility in this regard of His curse and the curse of all His creatures.

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَآ أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَى مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاه لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ أُولَئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللاَعِنُونَ

"Indeed those who hide the clear messages and guidance that I have revealed after I have made it clear to people in the scripture; those are cursed by Allaah and cursed by all who curse." *Soorah al-Baqarah*, (2): 159

The Prophet (ﷺ) further stressed the gravity of the sin of hiding knowledge saying:

((مَنْ كَتَمَ عِلْمًا مِمَّا يَنْفَعُ اللَّهُ بِهِ فِي أَمْرِ النَّاسِ أَمْرِ الدِّينِ أَلْجَمَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِلِجَامٍ مِنَ النَّارِ)).

"*Whoever hides knowledge by which Allaah benefits people in their affairs of religion, Allaah will bridle him on the Day of Resurrection with a bridle from the Hellfire.*"[11]

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[9] *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 442, no. 667.
[10] Ibid., Kitaab: al-'Ilm; Baab: Rubba Muballagh.

To have knowledge of Islaam but not convey it to others constitutes "hiding knowledge." Hiding knowledge may be a deliberate act wherein a person has the intention to keep the knowledge away from other people. This may occur in cases where people are asked about Islaam but refuse to reveal its teachings due to racial or tribal concerns. For example, in years past, some Indians of Guyanese or Trinidadian origin refused to teach African Guyanese and African Trinidadians due to their racist belief that Islaam was only for Indians. Likewise, some African Americans following the racist doctrines of the "Nation of Islam" or influenced by them have refused to explain Islaam to European Americans as they considered them to be devils or simply the enemy. Hiding knowledge may also be a passive unintentional act whereby a person has the knowledge but neglects to convey it due to reasons of shyness or feelings of inferiority. An example of passive hiding of knowledge may be found in the case of many immigrant Muslims who live, study, and work among non-Muslims for many years without ever saying a single word to them about Islaam.

[11] *Sunan Abu Dawud,* vol. , p. , no. , *Sunan Ibn-I- Majah,* vol. , p. , no. , *Sunan an-Nasai,*

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CALL

The pillars or foundations of *da'wah* consist of three elements: The Call, The Caller and The Called. Each has its own particular characteristics, prerequisites and goals. For the effective fulfillment of the responsibility of *da'wah* the requirements of each pillar must be thoroughly met.

The Aim or Goal of *Da'wah* is to spread the teachings of Islaam in their pristine purity. It is to enlighten disbelievers about Islaam and to correct mistaken beliefs among Muslims. The Prophet (°) said:

((إِنَّ ٱلْإِسْلاَمَ بَدَأَ غَرِيبًا وَسَيَعُودُ غَرِيبًا، فَطُوبَى لِلْغُرَبَاءِ)).

"*Islaam began as something strange, and it will return as something strange, so give glad tidings to the strangers.*"[1]

قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ! وَمَا الْغُرَبَاءُ؟ قَالَ:

When the companions asked, "O Messenger of Allaah, who are the strangers?" He replied,

((الَّذِينَ يُصْلِحُونَ عِنْدَ فَسَادِ النَّاسِ)).

"*Those who rectify [themselves and others] when people become corrupt.*"[2]
The goal of *da'wah* is expressed in the following verse and others like it.

اُدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ

"Call to the way of your Lord ..."*Soorah an-Nahl,* (16): 125

Abul-Hasan 'Alee Nadawee said the following regarding this verse: "The verse does not ask [the Prophet (°)] to invite people to faith, correct beliefs, prayers, good manners or call on people to respect human rights. No such things have been mentioned in particular since all these are covered in the phrase **"… to the way of your Lord."** … These words are profound and comprehensive."[3]
Sh. Ibn Baaz elaborated on the verse saying,

> "The way of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, is submission, the straight path, the religion of Allaah with which He sent His Messenger (°). Therefore, this is what must be called to, not the *math'hab* of such and such a person nor the opinion of any individual. …The way of Allaah is that which the Noble Qur'aan and the pure authentic *Sunnah* of the Messenger (°) directs one to… It is necessary for the Muslim missionary to call people to the whole of Islaam and not to cause division among them, nor to be a blind follower of a *math'hab,* a tribe, a shaykh or a leader, etc. Rather his aim should be

[1] *Sahih Muslim,* vol. , p. , no. .
[2] *Sunan at-Tirmithee,* 2765 (*Those who correct what people have corrupted of my Sunnah.*) Reported by at-Tabaraanee in *al-Jaami' as-Sagheer,* no. 290.
[3] *Inviting to the Way of Allah,* p. 11.

> to affirm and clarify the truth and establish people upon that truth, even if it contradicts the opinion of so and so or such and such a person."[4]

The call to Islaam, meaning the Qur'aan and Sunnah, should be in accordance with the understanding of the early righteous generations of Muslims (i.e., the *salaf*). As there is only one "way of Allaah", i.e., "religion of Allaah": Islaam, there is only one way to follow that religion. The Prophet (ﷺ) did not leave behind him a multitude of different ways to follow Islaam. Division and differences are not blessings, as some would claim based on fabricated narrations attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ). Allaah, Most Great and Glorious condemned factionalism saying:

وَلاَ تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

"Do not be of the pagans; of those who split up their religion and became sects, each sect rejoicing in what it has." (*Soorah ar-Room,* 30: 31-2)

And He alluded to the necessity of following the understanding of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) in the following verse:

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَاتَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَى وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَاتَوَلَّى وَنُصْلِهِ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَآءَتْ مَصِيرًا

"Whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has been made clear to him <u>and follows a way other than that of the believers</u>, I will leave him to his choice and place him in hell. And worst indeed is that destination." (*Soorah an-Nisaa,* 4: 115)

Allaah stated this despite the fact that opposing the Messenger (ﷺ) alone guarantees punishment. At the time when the verse was revealed "the believers" was none other than the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Ibn Mas'ood said, "Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) drew a line for us [in the dirt] and said, '*This is the path of Allaah.*' Then he drew other lines branching off to the right and to the left and said, '*These are the paths at the end of which is a devil calling people to it.*' Then he recited:

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلاَ تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ

"This is my straight path, so follow it and do not follow the [other] paths, for they will separate you from His path." (*Soorah al-An'aam,* 6: 153)"[5]

This *<u>h</u>adeeth* proves that the way is only one. Ibn al-Qayyim commented on this as follows: "This is because the path leading to Allaah is only one, and it is what He sent His Messengers on and sent His Books with. No one reaches Him except along this path. Even if people take every path and try to open every door, these paths will be blocked

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[4] *Words of Advice Regarding Da'wah,* pp. 33-35.

[5] Collected by A<u>h</u>mad, an-Nasaa'ee and ad-Daarimee, and authenticated by A<u>h</u>mad Shaakir in *al-Musnad,* vol.6, pp.89-90, no.4142.

and the doors will be locked, with the exception of this One Path. For it is connected to Allaah and leads to Him."[6]

'Abdullaah ibn Lu'ayy narrated that Mu'aawiyah ibn Abee Sufyaan got up among them and said, "Indeed the Messenger of Allaah (°) stood up among us and said, '*Certainly those before you from the People of the Book split up into seventy two sects and [the followers of] this religion will split up into seventy-three sects, seventy-two of them in the Fire and one in Paradise; that is the group* [jamaa'ah].' "[7] In another narration, when he was asked what the one sect was, he replied, "*What my companions and I are following now.*"[8]

Some aspects of Islaam are more critical than others; therefore priority must be given to the most important principles. The first pillar of Islaam is the declaration that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah and the first pillar of Eemaan (faith) is belief in Allaah. Furthermore, the only unforgivable sin is to worship other than Allaah. Consequently, the call to Allaah should focus on *Tawheed*, which is exactly what the Prophet (°) instructed his companions whenever he sent them. For example, Ibn 'Abbaas reported that when the Prophet (°) sent Mu'aath ibn Jabal to Yemen he told him:

((إِنَّكَ تَقْدَمُ عَلَى قَوْمٍ أَهْلِ كِتَابٍ فَلْيَكُنْ أَوَّلَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَي أَنْ يُوَحِّدُوا اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فَإِذَا عَرَفُوا ذَلِكَ فَأَخْبِرْهُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ فَرَضَ عَلَيْهِمْ خَمْسَ صَلَوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمِهِمْ وَلَيْلَتِهِمْ فَإِذَا صَلَّوْا فَأَخْبِرْهُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ افْتَرَضَ عَلَيْهِمْ زَكَاةَ أَمْوَالِهِمْ تُؤْخَذُ مِنْ غَنِيِّهِمْ فَتُرَدُّ عَلَى فَقِيرِهِمْ فَإِذَا أَقَرُّوا بِذَلِكَ فَخُذْ مِنْهُمْ وَتَوَقَّ كَرَائِمَ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ)).

"*You will be going to Christians and Jews, so the first thing you should invite them to is the assertion of the oneness of Allaah, Most High. If they realize that, then inform them that Allaah has made five daily prayers obligatory on them. If they pray them, then inform them that Allaah has made the payment of charity from their wealth obligatory on their rich to be given to their poor. If they accept that, then take it from them and avoid the best part of people's property.*" [9]

The call to *Tawheed* should address Allaah's unique unity with respect to His lordship and sovereignty over His creation, His names and attributes and His right to be worshipped alone, without any partner. This belief in *Tawheed* should also be manifest in human relations with God, in their social interactions among themselves and in their relationship with the world in which they live and the creatures of that world that have been subjected to them.

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[6] *At-Tafseer al-Qayyim*, pp. 14-5.
[7] *Sunan Abu Dawud,* vol. , p. , no. .
[8] *Mustadrak al-Haakim,*
[9] *Sahih Al-Bukhari,* vol. 9, pp. 348-9, no. 469 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol.1, pp. 15, no. 28.

Thus, whatever subject the *da'wah* may begin on, whether *hijaab,* terrorism, polygamy, etc., a conscious effort should be made to divert the topic ultimately to that of *Tawheed.* For it is only the acceptance of *Tawheed* which will provide the one being called with success in this life and the next. If he is convinced of the reasonableness of *hijaab*, and the unfairness of labeling Muslims as terrorists, and that polygamy is logical and natural, but he has not accepted the unique oneness of Allaah and that He alone deserves our worship, and dies in that state, he has failed and destroyed his opportunity for success in the next life. Whereas, if he accepted Allaah's unique oneness and worshipped Him alone, but was confused about the obligation of *hijaab,* terrorism and polygamy, and died in that state, his place in paradise would be guaranteed according to Allaah's promise and that of His Messenger.

A classical example of diversion in *da'wah* can be seen in the case of Prophet Yousuf in prison when two prisoners asked him to interpret their dreams.

Then it occurred to them, after they had seen the proofs to imprison him for a time. And there entered with him two young men in the prison. One of them said: "Indeed, I saw myself pressing wine." The other said: "Indeed, I saw myself carrying bread on my head and birds were eating from it." [They asked:] "Inform us of the interpretation of these things. Indeed, we believe you are one of the righteous." He replied: "Whenever food came to you as your provision, I informed you about it before it came. That is from what my Lord has taught me. Indeed, I have abandoned the religion of a people who did not believe in Allaah and the Hereafter. And I have followed the religion of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and we would never attribute any partners whatsoever to Allaah. This is from the Grace of Allaah to us and to humankind, but most people are not thankful.

O my two prison companions! Are many different lords better than Allaah, the One, the Irresistible? You are only worshiping besides Him names which you and your fathers made up for which no authority was revealed by Allaah. Judgment belongs to Allaah alone. He has commanded that you worship none besides Him; that is the upright religion, but most people do not know.

O my two prison companions! As for one of you, he will pour wine for his lord to drink and as for the other, he will be crucified and birds will eat form his head. This is the case judged concerning which you both inquire." (*Soorah Yousuf,* 12: 35-41)

It is also important to remember that the call is to the message of Islaam and not necessarily conversion to Islaam. It is an invitation in which the message of Islaam should be conveyed in its pristine purity and its comprehensive beauty. If that is the case, then people's negative reactions are not important, as long as they are not a result of faults on our part. Furthermore, the message should not be compromised in such a way as to water it down until its essence is lost. The essence of the message, *Tawheed,* must be conveyed wherever and whenever possible and as directly as possible.

The popular phenomenon of "Interfaith dialogue" attempts to blur the essential issues and put all religions on an equal footing. Since all religions call to goodness and righteousness, they should be tolerant and accepting of each other. Meaning, there is no need to try to convert each other's followers. Peaceful co-existence is what is needed and

not a battle for souls. Such a call is dangerous as it is fundamentally false. There is only one true religion, Islaam, and all others are false. Other religions, in an attempt to slow or halt the wave of conversions from their religions to Islaam, have introduced the interfaith dialogue concept after centuries of vilifying and demonizing it final Prophet, Muhammad (°).

As for dialogues and forums where knowledgeable Muslims have an opportunity present their evidences for the superiority of Islaam and its teachings to masses of non-Muslims, these are acceptable as long as the clear message of Islaam is not compromised.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CALLER

The individual who as accepted the duty of calling others to Allaah must possess certain characteristics to effectively convey the message. These attributes are mentioned in the Qur'aan and preserved in the record of the divinely guided lifestyle of the Prophet (°).

1. Knowledge

The foremost quality that the *daa'ee* (caller) should have is that of knowledge which is itself a prerequisite for faith. One must have sound knowledge of what one is inviting others to. If the Muslim missionary is ignorant, his message will appear weak and incapable of withstanding close scrutiny. This does not mean that the *daa'ee* must know all of Islaam before inviting others. However, it does mean that he should have clear knowledge of whatever limited area of Islaam he is inviting others to. Allaah, Most Great and Glorious, instructed the Prophet (°) to inform others that his call to Islaam was based on knowledge.

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُواْ إِلَى اللهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ

"Say: This is my way and I invite to Allaah with certain knowledge ..."

Soorah Yoosuf, (12): 108

Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad (°) made the pursuit of knowledge an obligation on all Muslims.

2. Kindness / Gentleness

It is essential that the *daa'ee* be soft in conveying the message because harshness could easily discourage people from listening to the truth. Allaah addressed this issue with regard to the Prophet himself saying:

لَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لاَنْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

"If you were harsh and hard hearted, they would have fled from around you."

Soorah Aal 'Imraan, (3): 159

Furthermore, it was as a result of Allaah's mercy that the Prophet (°) was gentle to those he invited to Islaam.

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ

"And by the mercy of Allaah you dealt with them gently."

Soorah Aal 'Imraan, (3: 159)

The *daa'ee* must always consider the fact that Allaah instructed Prophets Moosaa and Haaroon to gently communicate the message of Islaam to Pharaoh who was, at that time, claiming that he was God.

فَقُولاَ لَهُ قَوْلاً لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى

"So speak to him, both of you, mildly in order that he may reflect or fear God."

Soorah Taa Haa, (20): 44

The Prophet (°) also prayed saying:

"*O Allaah, be hard on whoever acquires control over the affairs of my nation and is hard*

on them. And be kind to whoever gains control over the affairs of my nation and is kind to them."[1]

Gentleness in *da'wah* affects the hearts of those being invited and makes them want to listen to the message. The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) was reported by his wife, 'Aa'ishah to have said,

((إِنَّ الرِّفْقَ لَا يَكُونُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانَهُ وَلَا يُنْزَعُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا شَانَهُ)).

"*Whenever gentleness is in a thing it beautifies it and whenever it is withdrawn from something it defaces.*"[2]

And he was quoted by Jareer as saying,

((مَنْ يُحْرَمْ الرِّفْقَ يُحْرَمْ الْخَيْرَ)).

"*One deprived of gentleness is deprived of all good.*"[3]

3. Wisdom

In disseminating the message of Islaam, the *daa'ee* must adjust himself or herself to each situation and use the most appropriate material.

اُدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ

"Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom ..."*Soorah an-Nahl,* (16): 125

Some scholars of *tafseer* explain that "wisdom" mentioned in this verse refers to the Qur'aan and the *Sunnah* due to the wisdom which they contain as well as the guidance to righteousness and happiness.[4]

In reference to wisdom Sh. Ibn Baaz said:

"A part of wisdom is to clarify the meaning and explanation in effective ways. [The caller] does this in the language of the one whom he is calling so he can understand [the message]. The *daa'ee* continues in this way until the one being called has no doubt remaining in his mind, and the truth, which may have been hidden due to a lack of explanation, or persuasive *da'wah* in his own language … now becomes apparent to him… If there is a need for religious admonition, then the *daa'ee* should preach mentioning the suitable verses and *hadeeths* which concentrate on encouragement and warnings. The heart of the one called will then awaken and be attracted to the truth."[5]

4. Patience

Most people who come to Islaam do so after a faith-seeking journey. Consequently, only a very few begin their search and end it with the same person. When declarations of faith are given it is after many stops on the road. Someone may start the person off and many help on the way and someone else helps the person finally declare their faith. Therefore, the responsibility of the *daa'ee* is to convey the message and not to put faith in peoples hearts. As Allaah informed His Messenger (ﷺ) and his followers:

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[1] *Sahih Muslim,* vol. 2, p. 1016, no. 4494.
[2] Ibid., vol. 4, p. 1370, no. 6274.
[3] Ibid., vol. 4, p. 1370, nos. 6270-6271.
[4] *Tafseer Ibn Kathir,* vol. , p.
[5] *Words of Advice Regarding Da'wah,* p. 66.

إِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلاَغُ وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ

"Your responsibility is only to convey [the message] and the accounting is on Me."
(*Soorah ar-Ra'd*, 13: 40)

5. Morality

Great stress has been placed in Islaam on good moral character. Prophet Muhammad (°) summarized the essence of the Islamic message saying,

((إِنَّما بُعِثْتُ لأَتَمِّمَ مَكارِمَ الْأَخْلاقِ)).

"Indeed, I was only sent to complete the most noble of character traits."[6]

And Allaah said in the Qur'aan,

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَى خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ .

"Surely you (Muhammad) have a magnificent character."
(*Soorah al-Qalam*, 68: 4)

The Prophet's companion, Ibn 'Abbaas explained that "character" here meant "religion", i.e., Islaam.[7] By using the term "character" to refer to the religion of Islaam, Allaah stresses the importance of morality in relationship to the religion. It was also reported that when the Prophet's wife 'Aa'ishah was asked about the Prophet's character, she replied, "His character was that of the Qur'aan."[8] That is, his manners were according to Allaah's instructions in the Qur'aan. Consequently, the development of good character depends on closely following the Qur'aan and the teachings of the Prophet (°). In this regard, Allaah also said in the Qur'aan:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

"Indeed you have in the Messenger of Allaah a beautiful example (of conduct)..." (*Soorah al-Ahzaab*, 33 :21)

Thus, the rites and rituals of Islaam cannot be separated from good manners. An-Nawwaas ibn Sam'aan quoted the Prophet (°) as saying,

((الْبِرُّ حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ وَالْإِثْمُ مَا حَاكَ فِي صَدْرِكَ وَكَرِهْتَ أَنْ يَطَّلِعَ عَلَيْهِ النَّاسُ)).

"*Righteousness is good character and sin is what itches in your heart and you dislike that people would find out about it.*"[9]

Islaam teaches man how to lead a morally righteous life by pointing out the proper way to live. Any Muslim who displays bad manners such as swearing or lying is either a

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[6] Narrated by Aboo Hurayrah and collected by al-Bukhaaree in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, al-Haakim and al-Bayhaqee in *Shu'ab al-Eemaan*. It has been authenticated in *Saheeh al-Jaami' as-Sagheer*, vol.1, p.464, no.2349.

[7] *Tafseer al-Qur'aan al-'Atheem*, vol. 4, p. 429.

[8] *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 358-360, no. 1623, *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 1, pp. 351-2, no. 1337 and Ahmad.

[9] *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, pp. 1358-9, no. 6196.

hypocrite pretending to be a Muslim or a very weak Muslim. Faith is inseparable from action. Aboo Hurayrah quoted the Prophet (°) as saying,

((أَفْضَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقاً)).

"*The believer whose faith is most complete is he whose character is best.*"[10] Consequently, throughout the Qur'aan, whenever Allaah instructs humankind to believe, He always links faith with command to do righteous deeds. Aboo Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (°) did the same, saying, for example,

((مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلَا يُؤْذِ جَارَهُ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ)).

"*Whoever believes in Allaah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbor, he should be kind to his guest and he should either speak good or be silent.*"[11]

That being the case, there should be an underlying principle of morality at the base of all Islamic teachings. Islaam covers all aspects of human existence; spiritual, social and economic. Consequently, there is in Islaam a network of moral principles governing all human relations with God, with other humans, as well as with the environment in which humans exist. For example, from an Islamic perspective, worshipping others besides God would be considered morally wrong and bad character, in the same way that lying to others or littering the environment would be considered morally objectionable. Therefore, it may be assumed that each of the pillars of Islaam and *Eemaan* were designed to develop a particular set of moral characteristics. Without understanding the moral and spiritual goals of the pillars, they remain empty rituals which cannot benefit anyone in the next life.

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[10] *Saheeh Sunan at-Tirmithee*, vol. 1, p. 340, no. 928.

[11] *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 32, no.76.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CALLED[1]

KEEP OBJECTIVES FOREMOST

Conversion or Clear Communication?

Before entering into our main topic, I would like to make three introductory remarks, the first of which is that we have to keep in mind that our primary objective in *da'wah* is not to convert the individual whom we are inviting. Conversion is in the hands of Almighty Allaah. He said in the Qur'aan:

á ÇÎÏÈ šú ïÏ‰FóŸ3 ß=æ& qèr ãt±„ `B “Ï‰öê @$£Å9r Mö7ôm& ôB “Ï‰öê w 7Rî â

"Indeed you cannot guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He wills."
(*Soorah al-Qasas*, 28: 56)

Our job is the same one that was given to all the prophets and messengers, and given to the Prophet Muhammad (°). It is to convey the message clearly, as Allaah said:

á ÇÎÏÈ Úú üÎ7ß$à»=7ß$žw) Éqߧ9$’?ã $Br â

"The only obligation on the messenger is to give the clear message."
(*Soorah an-Noor*, 24: 54)

Therefore, we have to constantly remind ourselves whenever we are in a discussion with an individual or giving a lecture to a group, that we are not there to win the argument or the debate. Our goal is to make sure they properly understand the true message of Islaam in its pristine purity. It may be impossible to convince them in an hour or a day to change the course of their whole life, but at least they should understand the reality of what you are calling to, the Oneness of Allaah, the finality of Muhammad's (°) prophethood, the certainty of the Day of Judgment, etc. Therefore, what is most important regarding those being called to Islaam is that the message should be crystal clear.

Listen Before You Speak

The second point is that we should strive to listen before we speak, to understand the other party and the other side, before we explain our points of view. If we care about the person that we are giving *da'wah* to and if we care whether they receive this message or not, then we should take care to listen to them. Many times when we are in a *da'wah* situation, we are more interested in getting our point of view across than in hearing their opinions. Either because we have already heard their arguments before, and or we know their opinions are wrong anyway, so what is the point in listening to them? "Jesus is not the son of God because of reasons one, two, three, four, and five. Furthermore, the Bible says this and the Qur'aan says that, and this Christian scholar said this and Paul said that, etc., etc." But the person you are telling that may not be interested in it because he does not believe that Jesus is literally the son of God, or he or she may be interested in some other issue. They may have some confusion about formal prayers in Islaam, why Muslims have to pray five times a day? So, we should take some time out and listen to

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[1] This chapter was delivered as a lecture by Ubayd Qadhi and edited by Dr Bilal Philips.

the person before we begin our discussion, and allow further time during the discussion listen to them.

Put Yourself in the Other Person's Shoes

The third and final point is to put ourselves in their shoes. After discussions, people generally do not remember what was actually said, the particular words that were used, the precise issues which were discussed, but how it was said, they way the words were used and the issues presented. They do not really remember what we say, yet we spend so much time bringing points and explaining proofs, because this is the style we have developed in learning Islaam. Consequently, we want to use texts from the Qur'aan and *hadeeth* to prove our points. However, if we stop and think for a moment, we know that most of the non-Muslims whom we give *da'wah* to do not understand this style of speaking. They do not understand, "Allaah said," "The Messenger (°) said," "The Companions said," "Shaykh so and so said," etc." They do not understand this type of terminology, nor its significance. So, we should put ourselves in their shoes and be gentle with them. We should try to be conscious of the impression we are giving them.

Let us try our level best to keep these three critical points in the back of our minds whenever we are in a discussion with somebody else.

READING THE SITUATION

When you find yourself in a situation, you have to read that situation in a way similar to the way you read a book. When you enter a room and find yourself in front of a group of people, or you go to a shopping center and you see somebody interested in Islaam, you have to read that situation carefully before making any statements. Meaning, you have to be conscious of the unique elements of the situation and tailor your approach accordingly. We must be conscious of two main things: first the environment, and second the actual individual.

Timing

When it comes to the environment, the first thing to be remembered is the timing, finding the appropriate time. Is it a suitable time to talk about this subject or not? The Prophet (°) used to select certain times to give his lectures. On one occasion one of 'Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood's students came to him and said: "We love your lectures and sermons. Please give us more!" as he only used to give one lecture a week. He replied: "I wish that I could give more. The only thing that prevents me is the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (°). He used to take care of us in giving sermons by selecting a suitable time, so that we would not become bored."[2] From this incident we can see that the Messenger (°) knew the characteristics of the called better than they knew themselves. People, in their enthusiasm and excitement, usually want more lectures in the beginning of any new

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[2] *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 1, no. 68. Ibn 'Abbaas also said, "Lecture the people once per week, if you must, then twice, and if you must be frequent then thrice. But, do not make the people bored of this Qur'aan. Do not let me catch you going to people when they are in conversation, and you relate some story to them, cut their conversation and make them bored. Instead be silent and if they request that you speak to them, talk to them while they desire it. And beware of rhyming supplications and avoid them, for I was used to the Prophet () and his companions not doing that." (*Fat'h al-Baaree*, vol. 11, no. 6337, p. 151 [Kitaab ad-Da'awaat, Baab: Maa Yukrahu minas-Saja').

program. However, the reality is that if you give too much or you speak for too long, they will eventually become bored. It is the nature of human beings to become lazy with time. Thus, the common saying "Familiarity breeds contempt." Yes, there will be a few who are keen and will remain enthusiastic due to their sincerity and high level of commitment. However, in such cases, we have to consider the norm and not the exceptions. Consequently, we have to consider our timing. We must ask ourselves, "Is this the right time? Am I giving them too much?" In another *hadeeth*, the Prophet (°) said, "Among the signs of an individual's understanding of his religion is the length of his prayer and the shortness of his speech." Therefore, we have to think about the length of our discussion, to insure that it is not too long, and we also have to think about the time we wish to engage in discussion, to insure that it is not at an inappropriate time. So read the environment, look around you. If you are in a busy market place, is it a suitable time to talk about the reality death, will you get your point across concerning punishment of the grave when everything around him is reminding him of the material world? Perhaps another topic would be more appropriate, or if you need to talk about reality, then take him alone in a room and have that discussion.

Audience

The second principle governing the environment is the audience. We have to read the audience as we read the circumstances and the situations. Are we talking to a group or an individual? There is a difference. Remember that when you are in a group of people you cannot convince them. Look at the example of *as'haabul qaryah* (People of the Village), mentioned in *Soorah Yaaseen*. Allaah, Most High, sent a messenger to the village, and village people rejected him. Then he sent another messenger, and they also rejected him. The scholars of *Tafseer* say that they imprisoned them and tortured them. So, Allaah sent a third messenger to support them against this group, but still they would not listen.
Later, Almighty Allaah said:

á ÇÈ šú üÎ™ëB$(qãÎ@$Ëö)»ƒ A$% Ìëó„ @ã ‘ þZƒ‰J$ Á ôB ä!` r â

"A man came running from the farthest corner of the village, [saying], 'O my people follow the messengers!' " (*Soorah Yaaseen,* 36: 20)

á ÇÈ br%GôB Nèdr #ô & ö/ä3éó„ ž w `B (qãÎ@$â

"Follow those who do not ask any reward from you, and they are rightly guided."
(36: 21)

á ÇÈ bqã_ëèI ø)Îr ’Î•Üù “%$!$ߊ ç& Iw ’Í $Br â

"And what is wrong with me that I do not worship the One who created me and to Him I return." (36: 22)

The story continues, with another person from the village who accepted the message trying to convince the villagers. Although he used logic and emotion to convince them, they remain unconvinced because they were a group. The scholars say that he was killed and he has his reward with Allaah Almighty.

á ÇÏÈ ûüÏB•ÕB$`B ÓÍ‚=è_r ’Îi ’Í •ÿî $JÎ ÇÏÈ bqB=è ’Íçþ Mø»ƒ A$‰ â

“He said: ‘If only my people knew that my Lord has forgiven me and put me among the honored.” (36: 26-7)

The point here is that there is a difference when you are talking to a group and when you’re talking to an individual. This is why Allaah Most High advises humankind:

á ÇÎÏÈ {rã¤6 ÿG? ©ê3ˆ Š°•èr Ó_¥B ‑ {qBqà}? b& ¤‰Ïm°qÎ NãÃÎã& $JRÎ @èâ

“I advise you with one thing to stand before Allah alone or in pairs and reflect.”
(*Soorah Saba*, 34: 46)

If you really want to convince someone about something, you need to talk to them one on one or maybe two. Once I went to a church, and I began addressing my audience about *Tawheed* and the realities of *Laa ilaaha illallaah.* After the talk, I realized from their questions that they were not interested in *Tawheed.* No one asked any questions about *Tawheed,* instead all their questions focused on what Islaam had to say about homosexuality. And in the course of their questions I came to realize that I was in a homosexual church and the members of my audience were mostly homosexuals and lesbians. Consequently, the time was not appropriate for the subject of my lecture. I was giving them the message of *Tawheed* and they were interested in what Islaam says about homosexuality. However, once I have read the audience and found myself in a group of homosexuals, do I tell them that the punishment for homosexuality is death, or should I inform them that they are to be thrown off the highest mountain? No. This is neither the appropriate time nor the suitable circumstance. They are in a group, so it is likely that they will not listen properly. Instead, I gave them a general answer, and after the talk and the answer session, I went to them and talked to them individually about purity, about relations with a wife, and about the blessings of having a wife, or a spouse, etc. As individuals they listened for another hour, but as a group they just wanted a quick answer then they left. So we have to carefully read the situation and determine if our topic is suitable for a group of people or if it is more appropriate for individuals.

Location

The third thing is to look at is your location. For example, Mount Safaa in the time of the Prophet (°) was used for announcements. So the Prophet (°) went there to make his point. He chose that particular location because he knew the people he was inviting to Islaam. He knew their nature and characteristics, so he chose Mount Safaa. He climbed up to its summit and addressed his people saying: “O people of Quraysh, if I were to tell you there was an army behind this hill would you listen to me?” He used his location to make his point.

As one calling to Islaam must choose the most suitable time to address a given audience, he or she must also choose the most suitable location. The location may be a public hall, a university auditorium, a school classroom, a mosque, an Islamic center’s hall, etc., or it may be a restaurant, a coffee shop, a park, the beach, out on the desert, etc. One must choose the appropriate location for the type of message one intends to deliver. What may be said over lunch in a restaurant may not be suitable for a university auditorium and vise versa.

INDIVIDUAL

Demographics

Almighty Allaah said:

á ÇÍÈ Ndç šú î7ãï ¾ïhBöq% È$ ¡ îÎ žvÎ @qß§ `B $Zù™ö& $Br â

“I did not send any messenger except that he spoke the language of his people to explain to them.” (*Soorah Ibraaheem*, 14: 4)

There is great wisdom in this principle. In general, the best person to talk to people is one who shares a similar background with them. I, as an American, understand the American society and culture in general, but, because I am descended from Indo-Pakistani emigrants to America, I know that I have limitations in addressing certain American audiences. It is better to get a reverted or converted Muslim from America to go give certain talks. Similarly, here in Qatar there is a wide mixture of people. Although it is good to give *da‘wah* to any and everybody, we should know our limitations. At times, some people would only feel comfortable to listen to certain things from somebody of the same background. Someone from Philippines or one who has visited Philippines and has intimate knowledge of their culture can make their talks more effective and relevant to a Filipino audience by giving local examples. Similarly, someone from England, or from Germany, etc. will likely have a greater impact on Brits and Germans, respectively. Their impact may be far greater than a very knowledgeable foreigner.

There are three elements that we must keep in mind when giving *da‘wah*: Islaamic knowledge of the Qur’aan and the Sunnah is one element you may use to talk to somebody. However, a great scholar quoting Allaah and His Messenger (°) not touch the heart of the person being called. Besides knowledge, one needs a degree of eloquence. Evidences and proofs are important, but for them to reach the audience, you need to have a good speaking manner. Even if you can quote the whole of *Saheeh al-Bukhaaree*, you still may not reach that person unless you can speak to them in an eloquent manner. The Prophet (°) was given *jawaami‘ul-kalim* (concise effective speech), to convey his message. However, even that is not enough, you also need to build relationships and that is where it becomes important to get someone from the same background as the person being called. To build a relationship with somebody, you have to have some common background. Perhaps you do not come from the same culture, but you speak their language or you work in the same profession. Wisdom becomes manifest when you are able to link your knowledge to eloquence in speech and your ability to build relationships. That is true wisdom.

Education

The second point concerning an individual that must be considered is their level of education and understanding. Talking to somebody who is a university graduate is different from talking to someone who is a common laborer. One my quote many things to a university graduate which the average laborer would not normally understand. Complicated ideas and philosophical concepts like the trinity, and discrepancies in Bible manuscripts are not suitable for discussion with people of limited education. A perfect example of that is Thul-Qarnayn mentioned in *Soorah al-Kahf*. Thul-Qarnayn went to three groups of people. One group of people who were a strong nation, according to the

scholars, he conquered and made very clear statements regarding them. He said: “I will punish whoever does wrong and is unjust, and I will give a reward to whoever believes in and does righteous deeds.” He talked to them in a precise law-giving manner, because they were a civilized nation, and a strong community. But when he went to the other side of the world, he met a group of people who couldn’t understand what Thul-Qarnayn was saying, and he could barely understand what they were saying; a completely different group of people. Did Thul-Qarnayn tell them to either believe or suffer punishment? No. He saw that these people were a mild people. Some scholars said that they were lazy, because they were not able to build a wall to prevent the Gog and Magog and they had to ask Thul-Qarnayn to do it. Perhaps they were a materialistic people as they offered Thul-Qarnayn money. Or perhaps, they were ignorant of advanced methods of construction and were not educated in the ways of great civilizations. They were used to paying other people to do jobs for them. So what did Thul-Qarnayn do with them? He told them that he did not want their money. Instead, he instructed them to help him do the job. This was not because he needed their help as he had an army with him, but because he wanted to educate them about hard work. He wanted to teach them about what it means to take matters into your own hands, to defend yourselves. So he dealt with them in a different manner than he dealt with the first nation. Consequently, you have to look at the level of education and understanding of the people you’re talking to and deal with them accordingly.

Misconceptions

The third issue we have to look at is preconceived ideas and misconceptions those being called to Islaam may have. Of course, that can only be determined if we allow them to express their thoughts, if we listen first, before trying to teach them. Once we have heard a misconception, we have to decide whether to spend a lot of time trying to correct the misconception or to choose another tactic, or another topic. For example, raising the sun from the west. This is in reference to the story of Prophet Abraham when he went to the king and said:

á ÈM‹Ûãr ¾Çó ã ” Ï‰$‘Î†Î â

“My Lord is the One who gives life and causes death.” And the king said:

á ÈM‹Ïär ¾Óó é$Î& â

“I can give life and cause death.” Obviously the king had a misunderstanding about the meaning of giving life and causing death, a misconception. What did Abraham do? Did he spend time trying to explain to the king the correct meaning? No. Instead he chose another way. He challenged him saying,

Ÿw ª!$ •ÿ. “Ï‰$Mŷçù É̀ ‹óJ$`Ï ¨Í ÏNù ÉÎô J$`Ï Æ ð±9$ ’Îû ®$ c îù â

á ÇÊÎÑÈ ûüÏÎ»à9$Pö)$ “Ï‰ö

“Indeed Allaah brings the sun from the east. Raise the sun from the west,’ and the disbeliever was dumfounded.” (*Soorah al-Baqarah*, 2: 258)

He was stupefied and completely unable to respond. Similarly, rather than stopping to explain each and every time a misconception is raised, and becoming so bogged down in defensive explanations, the situation may be avoided by raising issues which clearly demonstrate Islaam's superiority. For example, when misconceptions concerning polygamy in Islaam are raised, those raising them may be asked if monogamy is actually being practiced in the so-called monogamous countries of the West, or if one wife and innumerable girl-friends, mistresses, etc. can realistically be called monogamy. Furthermore, it may be noted that Islaam is the only religion whose scriptures explicitly say to marry only one wife.

á ǫ‰ḣ ⁰qù (që‰è? ǎv& ÓFǧøÅ ḃîù â

"And if you fear you will not be just, then marry only one." (*Soorah an-Nisaa*, 4: 3) That statement often stupefies the detractors as neither the Bible, Torah, Gospel, nor the Hindu Scriptures (Vedas, Upanishads, Gita, etc.) contain such a statement. Instead, their scriptures encourage unrestricted polygamy. On such occasions it is important to read the circumstances accurately, to see where the discussion is going. Whether it is a case of honest misunderstandings which need to be cleared, or deliberate misconceptions being thrown out to disable the caller.

CHOOSING YOUR APPROACH

Choice of Subject

Next we have to choose our approach. After reading the situation carefully and correctly, you must now choose the subject. What are you going to talk about? Prophet Muhammad (°) told Mu'aath ibn Jabal, "You are coming to a people from *Ahl al-Kitaab*, so the first thing you should invite them to is *Tawheed*." Notice the logic. You are coming to some People of the Scripture; therefore choose to talk to them about *Tawheed*. When you know the people, the situation and the circumstance, now you choose your topic.

There was a time some years back when enthusiastic Muslims used to continuously engage Christians in discussions concerning the Gospel of Barnabus. The origin and history of the Gospel of Barnabus is a long story. It is enough to note that there is mention in it that Prophet Jesus was not crucified, and that a prophet would come after him by the name of Ahmad. Consequently, Muslims spent a lot of time trying to convince Christians about the authenticity of the Gospel of Barnabus. Was that really important? If they believed in the Gospel of Barnabus, would it save them on the Day of Judgment? No. Is everything mentioned in the Gospel of Barnabas the Gospel truth? No. In fact there are passages and concepts contained in it which are incorrect and go against Islaamic teachings. Consequently, we must choose our topics wisely. We should ask ourselves: "What does this person really need to know to fulfill my obligation of conveying the clear message of Islaam to them? What do I have to give this person so that on the Day of Judgment I can say to Allaah: 'O Allaah! I conveyed Your message,'? The message which I have to give them is none other than *Tawheed*. We may begin our discussions by talking about the trinity, but many Christians do not believe in the trinity. Some believe that there is only one God and that Jesus Christ was a prophet of God. In such cases, there is no need to go into a long debate about the trinity, since they have already rejected it. Consequently, we have to find out what their actual beliefs are and not preach to them based on assumptions. We have to take some time out to listen, as was

mentioned earlier. If we do so, we may find that it would be more beneficial to talk about Prophet Muhammad (°). Thus, the choice of topic to discuss or share is as important as reading the situation correctly.

Method of Delivery

The next thing which we need to keep in mind when approaching others is our method of delivery. We have to decide how we are going to communicate our message. Are we going to use an emotion approach? Although, emotional arguments are to be avoided in general because they tend to cloud the issues and the facts, sometimes they are the best method. On one occasion, the Prophet (°) gave a sermon in which his eyes became red, voice became loud and his anger increased.[3] However, that may be appropriate in a Friday Sermon, because people are there in the Mosque for a particular religious reason. It is also important for motivating people for Jihaad, or for giving in charity, etc. At other times logic may be most appropriate. One of the Companions by the name of Mu‘aawiyah ibn al-Hakam, mentioned that he came to see Prophet Muhammad (°) after converting to Islaam, and he found him making his prayers, so he joined the prayers. When one of those praying behind the Prophet sneezed, so he said, "*Yarhamukallaah* [May Allaah have mercy on you]," while praying. The other Companions turned and stared at him in the prayer and he asked, "What are you all staring at?" So they started hitting their thighs to make him quiet. When the Prophet finished his prayer he simply said:

((إِنَّ هَذِهِ الصَّلاَةَ لاَ يَصْلُحُ فِيهَا شَيْءٌ مِنْ كَلاَمِ النَّاسِ)).

"*Indeed, the speech of people is not suitable for this prayer.*"[4]

He gave Mu‘aawiyah a simple logical reason for not talking during formal prayers, as opposed to raising his voice and screaming at him for his error.

Where possible, visual aids should be employed in conveying the message as it helps get the message across. People today are very much visually oriented. TV, video, computer, CD, DVD, etc., etc. have become the most popular media for communication. Consequently, using power point presentations, or charts and over head projectors are great aids in conveying the message today's audiences. The Prophet (°) himself employed visual aids in teaching his companions. On one occasion he prayed on top of the *mimbar* (pulpit) and then informed his companions that he only did so for them to learn his method of prayer.[5] On another occasion he drew a straight line in the dirt and other lines branching of from either side to demonstrate the significance of his straight path and the abundance of deviant paths leading away from the true path. And on another occasion he said, "*The Last Hour and I have been sent like these two,*" and he joined his forefinger and his middle finger,[6] in order to indicate how close the Final Hour was.

Everyone likes to hear information relayed in the form of a story. The human mind seems to relax and be comfortable in the psychological environment created by narratives. Consequently, stories from the bards and storytellers of the past to the authors

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[3] *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 410, no. 1885.
[4] Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 271-2, no. 1094.
[5] *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 2, pp. 18-9, no. 40 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 1, pp. 274-5, no. 1111.
[6] *Sahih Mus,im*., vol. 2, p. 410, no. 1885.

of fiction of the present are held in high esteem by societies throughout the world. Oftentimes, social criticisms have found their widest audiences through the vehicle of the story. For example, in *David Copperfield*, Charles Dickens attacked the exploitation of children by Victorian society; likewise, in *1984,* George Orwell commented on state interference in the lives of its citizens. The 90's movie, *Primary Colors*, taken from a book by Joe Klein, was a thinly disguised account of President Clinton's philandering while campaigning for office of the president.

Stories about people and civilizations of the past are especially interesting because they represent mysteries to the people of the present. Hence the Qur'aan and the Sunnah has, in a number of instances, employed the narrative (*qissah*) format in order to convey its message to human beings in a most intriguing manner. It should be noted, however, that while many of the most popular narratives are made up by their authors, the Qur'aanic and *hadeethic* stories are all true. They are not made up by Allaah and His Messenger () to convey His message, but are in fact true historical examples of the message. This fact has been emphasized in the Qur'aan in numerous passages. For example, Allaah refers to the Qur'aan as truth:

F وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ E

"I revealed the Book to you in truth." (*Soorah al-Maa'idah* (5):48)

Likewise, Allaah repudiates the idea that these narratives are invented. At the end of the story of Prophet Yousuf (Joseph) and his brothers, He says,

F مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَى وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ E

"It is not an invented story but a confirmation of the previous (scripture). (*Soorah Yoosuf* (12):111)

Consequently, it is not surprising to find that the use of examples from human life to illustrate points in the message is very effective.

Figurative speech is generally a more moving and effective method of communication than direct commands and detailed explanations. Hence, Allaah has also used them frequently in the Qur'aan:

« وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ 1

"Certainly I have made all kinds of comparisons (*mathal*) in the Qur'aan for humankind that perhaps they would reflect." (*Soorah az-Zumar,* 39: 27)

There are also numerous examples in the statements of the Prophet (°) where he relied on the *mathal* to get his message across.[7]

Gradual Progression

Read your progress by analyzing the level of your audience's internal motivation. This is a technique used by motivators to assess where somebody is relative to the point they are

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[7] They are too numerous to begin to list, but just as a tiny sample, refer to the simile of the people who observe the limits set by Allaah and those who do not as people on the upper and lower decks of a ship (*Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 3, p. 406, no. 673). See also *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 1, p. 278, no. 468, for a simile of the believers as a structure whose bricks support each other.

trying to get across and to gradually get the person to agree with their point. By reading the person's body movements one can assess the person's response position and his or her progress according to the scale. At the bottom of the scale is "neglect – indifferent." If you are talking and somebody is ignoring you, it means that they are completely indifferent to what you have to say and to the topic on which you are speaking. This is what is known as a "difficult person", because they just do not care about your point of view. Convincing them is virtually impossible, because they have no interest in what you have to say. They are simply out of your reach. So rather than trying to convince them to agree with you, you have to find something emotional to get them into the discussion. The ten-point scale show how a person can gradually evolve from being indifferent to being hostile, to being neutral, to being curious, to finally agreeing. You have to take a person based on where they are and gradually get them to a point of agreement. What happens is, for instance, you meet somebody who is very hostile. You know the person is hostile because they continually interrupt you saying, for example, "No, I don't agree with you." Having read their language and assessed their hostile stance, do you then argue back insisting that they have to agree with you? Will such a response produce a positive result or simply degenerate in a shouting argument? You cannot change somebody from feelings of anger and opposition to agreement immediately. In such a circumstance, the method which should be used is called the PAR (Probe, Align, Raise) method. Probe your adversary, meaning, ask them why are they so hostile? Find out the reasons for their hostility. Then align yourself to their level. See the situation through their eyes. Empathize with them. Then try to raise them to a point of neutrality. Say to them, for example, "Would you mind if I tried another point with you? Is that ok? Can I try another point?" "Ok, yes?" Once they respond positively, you have brought them to neutral. So, rather than confronting their negativity with negativity and ending up in a wrestling match, try to think instead how you can get the hostile audience to a neutral point. Neutral is the same as saying, "I'm willing to listen." He may be reserved, but at least he is now listening. The next step is to get them interested and then to get them excited, before they finally agree.

If somebody is fearful, saying, for example, "I'm very afraid of Muslims. You're all terrorists," will you be able to get them to believe in *Tawheed* in five minutes? You have to first remove the fear, you have to get them to be willing to listen, then you have to get them interested, then you can finally get them to agree. This process may take days or weeks before you raise the person above their negative feelings and emotions. It is a skill requiring that we read the situations and the people, respond to their needs appropriately. Like a doctor who does not start prescribing medicine for the patient as soon as they step in his office, but, instead he listens patiently to the patient's complaints and assesses their illnesses, which my require further tests, then and only then, does he prescribe the appropriate medicine. We should also have long-term goals, one month, three months, and six months, before expecting people to commit. Human beings have to grow through these emotional stages and levels. Humans cannot, like a light bulb, go on and off immediately. Anger to happiness and back to anger, joy to sadness and back to joy all take time.

Gradual progression can also be seen in the declaration of faith itself. First false gods are negated, then the One True God, Allaah is affirmed. This principle is applicable in many *da'wah* situations. Where, for example, a Christian says that he believes in the

divinity of Jesus because his prayers to Jesus were answered. Logical arguments about Jesus' divinity do not work because he has practical experience which is enough to win his emotional commitment. If we ask him about the prayers of a Hindu to his god of stone being answered, the Christian will agree that the stone god did not answer the Hindu's prayers, he will affirm that it was the true God who did. However, by doing so, he has also cancelled the basis of his argument for the divinity of Jesus and we can then affirm that it was the One True God who answered his prayers and not his imaginary god, Jesus. Gradual progression in Islaamic law is usually illustrated by the gradual prohibition of alcohol. Similarly, if a person drinks alcohol, fornicates and worships idols, we should not try to get him to quit everything all at once. We prioritize and work our way from the most important to the very important and from there to the important.

ENGLISH TECHNICAL TERMS FOR DA‘WAH

Useful Vocabulary for Da'wah

Words	*Definitions*	*Derivatives*
adultery	unlawful sex committed by married people with other than their spouses.	adulterer, adulteress
alcoholism	the habit of drinking alcohol.	alcoholic, alcohol
amputation	to cut off a part of the body.	amputate
apostasy	abandonment of religious beliefs.	apostate
ascribe	to explain as coming from a particular source or cause.	ascription
associate	to join in a relationship.	association
atheist	a person who does not believe in God.	atheism
believe	to accept as real or true.	belief, believer
chastity	staying away from illicit sex.	chaste
command	to order.	commandment
conform	to make similar in form or character.	conformity, conformist
convert	to adopt a new religion or belief.	conversion
convey	to make known; communicate.	conveying
Darwin	the man responsible for the theory of evolution.	Darwinism, Darwinist
deity	God, holy being supreme being.	deism
destiny	divine fate.	destined
devote	to give oneself completely.	devotion
disbelieve	to refuse to believe to believe in to reject or deny.	disbelief, disbeliever
divine	related to or being a deity.	divinity
diyah	blood money paid for the killing of another.	
essence	basic nature, its being.	essential
faith	belief and trust in God.	faithful
fornication	unlawful sex between unmarried people.	fornicate, fornicator
guidance	counseling, advising.	guide
homicide	a killing of one person by another.	homicidal
hudood	Divinely revealed boundaries and punishment prescribed by Allah.	
illegitimate	illegal, unlawful.	legitimate
inheritance	money or property left by a dead person given to relatives, friends, and charity...etc.	inherit, heirs
intercede	intervene, mediate, plead, to ask on ones behalf.	intercession
interest	usury; a charge for a loan.	
intolerance	unable to respect other beliefs or opinions.	intolerant
invalid	not valid, not correct	validity
mission	a task to be carried out.	missionary
monotheism	the belief and worship of one God.	monotheist

morality	the quality of being virtuous.	morals, moralist
obligation	a binding responsibility.	obligatory
oppose	to disagree with.	opposition
pedophile	an adult who buys sexual favors from children.	pedophilia
polytheism	associating partners in worship with God.	polytheist
principle	a fundamental truth.	principles
prohibit	to forbid or ban by law	prohibition
propagate	spread or broadcast.	propagation
purify	to make clean or pure.	purification
purpose	goal, intended or desired result.	purposeful
retaliate	to return like punishment.	retaliation
rebellious	stubbornly disobedient	rebellion
rectify	to make right or correct.	rectified
reincarnate	the act of rebirth in another body.	reincarnation
repentance	regret (a sin), seeking forgiveness.	repent
resurrect	returning from death to life.	resurrection
retribution	a suitable return.	retribute
sacrifice	Offering something to God.	sacrificial
sanctioned	allowed, legal.	sanctions
scriptures	Religions sacred books (i.e. Bible).	script
secular	worldly, not religious or spiritual.	secularist
slander	false statement said: or spread about a person damaging his reputation.	slanderous
slaughter	to kill an animal for food.	
spiritual	referring to the spirit or soul.	spirituality
supplicate	to make a humble appeal to God.	supplication
terrorism	systematic use of terror	terrorist
testimony	a formal declaration or affirmation.	testify
theory of evolution	development of more complex forms of life (plants, animals) from earlier and earlier forms.	evolved
treason	Betraying	
unique	being the only one of its kind.	uniqueness
veiling	complete outer covering from head to toe of a Muslim woman.	veil
vice	Immoral habit.	vices
virtue	moral righteousness.	virtuous
worship	to love or admire devotedly.	worshiper

GENERAL

DA‘WAH

ISSUES

GENERAL DA‘WAH ISSUES

MUSLIM MEN ARE POLYGAMISTS

Muslims are often accused of being promiscuous because polygamy is legal in Islaam.

1. Islaam did not introduce polygamy. Unrestricted polygamy practiced in most human societies throughout the world in every age. Islaam regulated polygamy by limiting the number of wives and establishing responsibility in its practice.

2. Monogamy of the West inherited from Greece and Rome where men were restricted by law to one wife but were free to have as many mistresses among the majority slave population as they wished. In the West today, most married men have extramarital relations with mistresses, girlfriends and prostitutes. Consequently the Western claim to monogamy is false.

3. Monogamy illogical. If a man wishes to have a second wife whom he takes care of and whose children carry his name and he provides for he is considered a criminal, bigamist, who may be sentenced to years in jail. However, if he has numerous mistresses and illegitimate children his relation is considered legal.

4. Men created polygamous because of a need in human society. There is normally a surplus of women in most human societies.[1] The surplus is a result of men dying in wars, violent crimes and women outliving men.[2] The upsurge in homosexuality further increases the problem. If systems do not cater to the need of surplus women it will result in corruption in society. Example, Germany after World War II, when suggestions to legalize polygamy were rejected by the Church. Resulting in the legalization of prostitution. German prostitutes are considered as workers like any other profession. They receive health benefits and pay taxes like any other citizen. Furthermore, the rate of marriage has been steadily declining as each succeeding generation finds the institution of marriage more and more irrelevant.

5. Western anthropologists argue that polygamy is a genetic trait by which the strongest genes of the generation are passed on. Example, the lion king, the strongest of the pack, monopolizes the females thereby insuring that the next generation of lion cubs will be his offspring.

6. Institutional polygamy prevents the spread of diseases like Herpes and AIDS. Such venereal diseases spread in promiscuous societies where extra-marital affairs abound.

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[1] Russia: 46.1% male to 53.9% female; UK: 48.6% male to 51.5% female; USA: 48.8% male to 51.2% female; Brazil: 49.7% male to 50.27% female (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* vol. 17, pp. 34, 270, 244). Exceptions in China and India due to wide-spread infanticide on a national scale.

[2] According to the Center for Health Statistics, American women today can expect to live to be 77.9 years old, while men can only expect to live to 70.3.

7. Polygamy protects the interests of women and children in society. Men, in Western society make the laws. They prefer to keep polygamy illegal because it absolves them of responsibility. Legalized polygamy would require them to spend on their additional wives and their offspring. Monogamy allows them to enjoy extra-marital affairs without economic consequence.

8. Only a minority will practice polygamy in Muslim society. In spite of polygamy being legal in Muslim countries, only 10-15% of Muslims in these countries practice polygamy. Although the majority of men would like to have more than one wife, they cannot afford the expense of maintaining more than one family. Even those who are financially capable of looking after additional families are often reluctant due to the psychological burdens of handling more than one wife. The family problems and marital disputes are multiplied in plural marriages.

9. Conditions have been added for polygamy in many Muslim countries. For example, in Egypt, the permission of the first wife must first be obtained. This and similar conditions are a result of colonial domination. No woman in her right mind will give her husband permission to take a second wife. Such a condition, in fact, negates the permission given by God in the Qur'aan.

10. Others have accepted polygamy on condition that it not be for "lust". That is, if the wife is ill, or unable to bear children, or unable to fulfill the husband's sexual needs, etc., taking a second wife is acceptable. Otherwise it becomes "lust" on the husband's part and is consequently not acceptable. The reality is that "lust" was involved in the marriage of the first wife. Why is it acceptable in the case of the first and not the second? As has already been pointed out, men are polygamous by nature. To try to curb it by such conditions will only lead to corruption in society.

11. Feminists may object to this male right by insisting that women should also be able to practice polygamy. However, a woman marrying four husbands would only increase the problem of surplus women. Furthermore, no child would accept his or her mother identifying the father by the "eeny meeny miney mo" method.

12. The question which remains is, "If God is good and wishes good for His creatures, why did he legislate something which would be harmful to most women?" Divine legislation looks at the society as a whole seeking to maximize benefit. If a certain legislation benefits the majority of the society and causes some emotional harm to a minority, the general welfare of society is given precedence.

ARRANGED MARRIAGES

Muslims are often accused of forcing their daughters into marriage

1. Islamic law requires that females must give their permission before they are married. Prophet Muhammad (°) said, "*The permission of virgins should be taken and their silence is their consent.* " On one occasion a woman came to the Prophet (°) and

informed him that her father had married her off without her permission. He offered to annul her marriage, however, she did not accept his offer saying that she only wanted to confirm her right. A previously married woman has the right to choose for herself.

2. Muslims are encouraged to help their children find suitable marital partners since males and females are raised separately in society. Women are spared having to look for their own mates.

3. From a Western perspective, where teenagers are often required to leave home and go out to work and look after themselves, it would seem ludicrous for parents to later on suggest whom they should marry.

4. It has become a practice among some Muslims to force their children to marry their cousins. For Muslims in the West it becomes a means to help their family members also reach the West. Consequently, there have been a number of cases reported in the newspapers in England of the Home Office rescuing Muslim girls from forced marriages at the airport. There are also many Muslim girls who have run away from home rather than be forced to marry relatives in villages in Pakistan or India. Such girls are being given new identities by police authorities and will likely lose their Islaam in the process.

MUSLIM WOMEN CANNOT MARRY THEMSELVES
The Muslim woman is considered oppressed since she must have her father's permission to get married.

1. Islaamic law requires the permission of a woman's father for her marriage to be valid. Prophet Muhammad (°) was reported to have said, "*The marriage of any woman who marries herself without her guardian's consent is invalid.*"

2. From a Western perspective in which teenagers are required to leave home and fend for themselves, it would seem unthinkable that the father's permission would be needed for marriage.

3. The Muslim woman lives a sheltered life. She is not used to dealing with men outside her blood relatives whom she cannot marry (*mahaarim*). The father will be more capable of judging the young man objectively. The young woman could easily be fooled or sweet-talked as she tends to be more emotional in her judgement.

4. If the guardian refuses proposals for illegitimate reasons like the persons tribe, race, color, status, the young lady has the right to seek redress from the court. If he judge concludes that the father is wrongfully preventing his daughter from marriage, he may take the guardianship from the father and act as the girls guardian.

DOUBLE STANDARD IN MARRIAGE

Muslim males are allowed to marry non-Muslim females but Muslim females are only allowed to marry Muslim males. This is often cited as discrimination and one of the symbols of oppression of Muslim females.

1. Muslim males are not allowed to marry any non-Muslim female. Only Christians and Jews (People of the Book) and not any other religion. This is due to the fact that the scriptures held sacred by Christians and Jews do contain large portions of revelation even though the texts have been distorted and changed. Consequently, in honor of the revelation still remaining in these texts, permission was granted to marry their women. However, the condition of chastity is added to the permission mentioned in the Qur'aan. Consequently, only a woman who is either a virgin, divorcee or widow can be married. This means that the common practice of Muslims from the East coming to Europe and America and finding blue eyed blondes in discos for wives is quite illegitimate. Finding chaste females in the West is more difficult than finding the proverbial "needle in the haystack." By mid teens, virginity is looked at as a fault rather than a virtue.

2. The reason for allowing men and not women is in order to protect the woman's religion. If a Muslim man requested his Christian wife not to bring alcohol or pork in his house and that she not wear mini-skirts or kiss his friends, she could comply without affecting her religious teachings. However, If a Christian husband requested his Muslim wife to purchase alcohol and serve him pork, to wear mini-skirts and kiss his friends since it is his custom to kiss the wives of his friends. It is natural for a wife to try to please her husband. In the case of the Muslim wife, that could lead to the destruction of her faith.

3. Marriage to non-Muslims is discouraged in situations where Muslims are weak or in the minority in order to safeguard the religion of the children. If a Muslim man marries a non-Muslim woman in the West and their marriage ends in divorce, or the man dies, the courts will award custody of the children to the wife who will likely raise them as non-Muslims. However, if they were married in a Muslim country, the *Sharee'ah* would not give the children to a non-Muslim mother. They would instead be given to either the husband or his relatives in order to insure they receive a Muslim upbringing.

DIVORCE IS EASY IN ISLAAM

It is generally held that divorce in Islaam is very easy; a man only has to say to his wife: "You're divorced," three times and its all over.

1. In reality, divorce is not that easy in Islaam. There are conditions which must be fulfilled even before its proceedings can begin. Firstly, divorce cannot be pronounced while a woman is menstruating. Prior to the beginning of the menstrual cycle, many women suffer mood swings and become cranky. The biological changes in their systems cause psychological changes that are commonly known as PMS

(premenstrual syndrome). In order to ensure that the cause of the husband pronouncing divorce is not a product of behavioral changes brought on by PMS, divorce pronouncement during menses is prohibited. Secondly, the divorce cannot be pronounced during a period between menses in which the couple has had sexual relations. The rational being that if the man cared enough about the woman to have sexual relations, he needs to reflect about his decision more before going ahead. He will have to wait until after the woman's next menses ends, before he can pronounce divorce.

2. The pronouncement is considered invalid if the man was in such a rage that he did not know what he was saying. This is based on the Prophet's statement, "*The divorce pronouncement is not valid at the time of [mental] seizure.*"

3. After the pronouncement, the divorce does not come into effect until the woman has had three subsequent menstrual cycles. The first cycle is to insure that she is not pregnant and the second two are further opportunities for reconciliation. She is not supposed to leave her home as is common among Muslims today. The husband is required to continue to maintain her until the waiting period [*'iddah*] ends.

4. If a woman is pregnant at the time of the pronouncement, her *'iddah* is until she has delivered her child. This principle gives the maximum amount of time for reconciliation in order for the welfare of the child to be reflected upon.

5. In the final analysis, divorce proceedings are somewhat easier than in many Western countries [a notable exception being the well known "Mexican divorce" which can be concluded in a matter of minutes]. The theory being that marriage in Islaam is primarily a contract and not a sacrament as originally perceived in the West where it was considered unbreakable [and remains as such among Catholics]. Consequently, if the contract was entered into with a verbal statement of "I do," and witnesses, it should be dissoluble with the statement "I don't," and witnesses.

DIVORCE IS ONLY THE MAN'S RIGHT

Muslim women are often portrayed as being oppressed due to their being denied the right to divorce.

1. The pronouncement of divorce (*t̲alaaq*) is primarily the right of the husband as he is in the position of authority in the family. Also PMS considerations and the emotional nature of women could cause a greater incidences of divorce if it were put the hands of the wives as an automatic right.

2. The wife may institute divorce proceedings by making her request through the court. If the judge (*Qaad̲ee*) sees just cause or a real need on her part, he can act on her behalf and institute the *khula'* divorce which has a waiting period of only one menstrual cycle.

3. A woman can obtain the right to pronounce divorce if it is made a condition in her marriage contract which her husband agrees to. She may also gain the right by requesting her husband's permission at any point during the marriage. If permission is given she may pronounce divorce according to the previously mentioned conditions.

MUSLIM WOMEN ARE OPPRESSED BY THE ISLAAMIC DRESS CODE
The covering of Muslim women has become one of the international symbols of female oppression in feminist circles.

There are two major trends which have developed in the West over the past century. On one hand, the fashion industry has systematically unclothed women. From being fully clothed from head to toe at the turn of the century, she now wears virtually nothing when the weather permits. On the other hand there has been a dramatic rise in the reported incidents of rape. In the USA in the early 90s the reported incidents of rape had crossed the 100,000 mark. And researchers estimated that the actual number was between 7 to 10 times that number since most women are shy to report rapes. The two trends are closely interrelated. The woman in the West has become a sex-object with which to sell products thereby pumping up the sexual tension of the society. The Corvette is not sold based on its powerful engine or its special features, instead the car is displayed with a model in a bikini lying on it. Similarly, a new Gillette razor blade is not sold by giving details about its new titanium blades. Instead, a man is shown in ads shaving with a woman's hand with long red fingernails coiled around hold his. The subliminal message being taught is: You buy the car, you get the girl. You buy the razor, you get the girl.

Islaam prescribes the covering of females for two primary reasons stated in the Qur'aan. God says in *Soorah al-Ahzaab* (33: 59):

يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلاَبِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَن يُعْرَفْنَ وَلاَ يُؤْذَيْنَ

"Let them cast their outer garments over their bodies. That is best in order that they be known and not harmed."

The *hijaab* is to make the Muslim woman known in the society as a virtuous and honorable woman. Her *hijaab* makes the statement that she is not available and not interested in any advances. Many Muslim women who have emigrated to the West take of their scarves and outer garments because they claim it draws attention to themselves. If they expose their hair and dress in modest western dresses no one will look at them. It is true that the *hijaab* does provide a level of anonymity, as many of the woman's physical details will be hidden. However, the intent is not to prevent men from looking. When men see a nun in her habit, fully covered like a Muslim woman in full *hijaab*, they will turn their heads and stare at her. Similarly, when they see a woman walking in a bikini, they will also turn their heads and stare. However, the first stare is different from the second. The first is out of curiosity, having seen something unusual, while the second is out of lust and aroused sensuality. The

consequence of the second is the molestation of women on a national scale while the first causes respect.

The penalty in the Islaamic state is very severe for rape in order to further guarantee protection for females. Where weapons of any type are used in the rape, the punishment is death. The death penalty has also been introduced in Philippines and it is being called for in India currently. However, to allow women to expose themselves and then kill those who react unduly is not practical. The law should be balanced. The circumstances, which might encourage rape, should first be removed from the society, then a severe penalty may be enacted.

It may be said that even in societies where women are fully covered, they may still be approached and molested. However, if the vast majority of those who are molested are not properly covered, the principle of protection still applies. Even in the society of the Prophet, one thousand four hundred years ago, some women were molested and raped.

Some people question the imposition of *hijaab* by the Islaamic state. Is it a personal choice of women or a legal obligation? It is the responsibility of the head of every family to insure that the women of his household leave the home in a legally acceptable state of dress. The state is further responsible to prevent any women who appear in public in a state of undress in order to protect public dignity and morality. The West has set its own limits for dress which change according to the mood of society. At one point in time, strip joints were illegal. Now many bars have topless waitresses and dancers. In most states, a woman may not appear in public topless. However, a woman recently contested the law in Florida and won her case. Complete nudity remains public crime throughout the West, though nudist camps and nudist beaches have sprung up in different locations in Europe and America.

There are conditions which must be fulfilled for the *hijaab* to be acceptable. a) It should be wide and loose so as to not show the shape of the woman's body; b) it should be made of thick material which will not reveal what is underneath; c) It should not be colorful and ornamented so as to attract sexual admiration.

Where the *hijaab* has become a cultural norm and women comply out of fear of embarrassment, it will not be worn properly. It may become transparent, or worn tight exposing the curves of the body, or it may become so ornamented as to be attractive by itself. It may be short so as to expose the dress underneath, or the face may be covered and the front of the hair exposed. Such practices are the result of women wearing *hijaab* for the wrong reasons. They should be educated to realize that it is for their benefit and for the benefit of the society.

DOUBLE STANDARD IN INHERITANCE

The unequal division of inheritance between men and woman is sometimes cited as an example Islaam's oppression of women.

1. Before looking at the division of inheritance in Islaam with regard to women, one needs to look at Western inheritance laws. The right for women to inherit and own property was only given to women in the West at the turn of the century, whereas that right was given to women in Islaam 1,400 years ago. Furthermore, in the West, a person may legally write a will giving all of their wealth to their dog or cat and exclude their wife, children and other relatives. In the Islaamic system, the rights of wives, children and relatives to inherit are protected. Set portions of the inheritance to be given to them are identified in the Qur'aan. No one can write a will and cancel or modify what is due to them. A will can be written to give up to a maximum of one third to those who would not inherit by law. As to leaving even the third of one's wealth to animals, the Muslim State could step in on behalf of the inheritors and cancel such a will as it obviously indicates some form of mental disorder. The third would then be divided up among the natural inheritors.

2. In Islaamic society men are responsible for the maintenance women. For example, if a son, a daughter and a mother inherit, the son also has the additional responsibility of looking after his sister and his mother. Consequently, based on the male role, Islaamic Law awards the son twice the portion of the daughter.[3]

3. However, the two to one division is not applied in all cases. For example, the Qur'aan states (4: 11): "If a man or woman [died and] left neither descendents for ascendants, but left behind a brother or a sister, each gets 1/6th; and if they are more than two, they equally share 1/3rd."

TWO WOMEN EQUAL TO ONE MAN

The finger is also pointed at Islaam as considering women inferior since the witness of one man is equal to that of two women.

1. The Qur'aan does state in *Soorah al-Baqarah* (2: 282): **"Get two of your men as witnesses. But if two men are not available, then get a man and two women agreeable to you as witnesses, so that if one of them makes a mistake, the other can remind her..."** However, this principle is not applied in all cases. This is specific to business contracts as the beginning of the verse indicates. Since women in Muslim society generally stay at home and men work outside the home, they tend not to be that familiar with business dealings and as such they may forget some of the details – as the verse explains.

2. This consideration may seem quaint in the West where women have been a part of the work force for much of the 20th century. Women entered the work force as a product of the need for them in the society and the munitions factories during the two World Wars. Millions of men in their prime were sent overseas to fight and their jobs had to be filled by women. Once the wars ended, many refused to return to their homes and the feminist movement was born. Eventually, many women came to look at

[3] The mother would receive 12.5% (1/8th), the daughter 29.2% (1/3 of 7/8) and the son 58.3% (2/3 of 7/8).

fulfillment in the work place and not at home. Even if her job was only that of a secretary, harassed by her boss, smiling sheepishly to keep her job, she felt it was better than being stuck at home cooking, washing dishes, changing diapers and preparing bottles of milk. Many Western women became familiar with business dealings, so the previously mentioned considerations would seem to them irrelevant. However, even in America, the vast majority of women are housewives, spending most of their lives in their homes, while their husbands work and bring home the bread.

3. In areas of female expertise, the witness of a single woman is sufficient. For example, when ‘Uqbah ibn al-Haarith complained to the Prophet that a former slave woman informed him that she had wet-nursed both himself and his wife, Umm Yahyaa bint Abee Ihaab, he replied, “ كَيفَ وَقَدْ قِيلَ How can you object when it has already been stated?”4 According to Islaamic law, those who suckled from the same breast before the age of two become suckling brothers and sisters and are not allowed to marry. Consequently, their marriage was annulled on the basis of a single woman’s testimony.

BLOOD-THIRSTY MUSLIMS

Animal lovers in the West have often pointed the finger at the Muslim practice of slaughtering animals, especially on the occasion of ‘Eed al-A<u>d</u>’haa. The French actress Bridget Bardot had made a number of disparaging remarks about Muslims in France for which she was fined in court. It is considered to be cruelty to animals.

1. This is a case of irrational sentimentality. Aborting millions of human fetuses yearly is perfectly fine, but cutting an animal’s neck is considered inhumane. The Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) has attempted to prohibit Muslims from slaughtering animals in many locations in the West.

2. The Western method of slaughtering involves rendering the animals unconscious prior to cutting off their heads. Smaller animals like chickens are stunned by electrocution while larger animals are stunned with a stun gun. The stun gun contains a piston which strikes the skull of the animal and knocks it unconscious. Anyone who has ever received an electric shock will confirm that it is not a pleasant experience at all. A jolt sufficient to render an animal unconscious will be quite painful. Whacking someone in the head with an iron bar is, without a doubt, an extremely painful experience. Both of these methods are in no way humane. They cause the animals to suffer incalculable pain and are, in fact, geared to facilitate production line slaughter of large numbers of animals.

3. Muslim slaughter which specifies that the knife should be razor-sharp is not felt by the animal. The Prophet (°) said, “...*Whenever you slaughter, make the knife sharp and relieve the animal.*” Only the jugular veins and the esophagus are cut allowing

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[4] *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. .

the animal's heart to pump out most of the blood. The lack of blood to the brain causes the animal to eventually fall into unconsciousness and die gradually. The preferred method of suicide among many Westerners is to cut one's wrists with a sharp knife or razor-blade as it is relatively painless.

4. As for the argument of vegetarians that humans were not meant to eat meat, it is scientifically false. Humans are neither herbivores who do not have the necessary enzymes to digest meat, nor are they carnivores who do not possess the enzymes to digest vegetable matter. They are omnivores, capable of processing both vegetable and meat. The real force behind vegetarianism is the Hindu belief in *karma* which leads Hindus to believe that the goat you eat may be your reincarnated relative.

5. Slaughtering animals in order to use their fur for clothing, though objectionable in the West today, is perfectly valid according to Islaamic law. The animals were submitted to humans for benefit. If their skins and fur provide humans with warmth in winters, they may kill them for it. However, the method of slaughter should be humane. Currently, the animals are killed by clubbing them to death which would be *haraam* (prohibited) according to Islaamic law.

ISLAAM WAS SPREAD BY THE SWORD

The common image of Islaam being spread by an Arab on camel back riding in off the desert with a Qur'aan in one hand and a scimitar (a curved sword) in the other offering a choice of either accepting Islaam or losing one's head.

1. As mentioned earlier under the issue of apostasy, forcible conversion is prohibited in Islaam. The religion did not spread by the sword. There were military confrontations between the Muslim state and the existing world powers of Rome and Persia. However, the areas conquered were put under Muslim administration and the populations were free to maintain their own beliefs. Muslims ruled Egypt, Palestine and Lebanon from the 8th century and sizeable Christian communities continued to exist over the past 13 centuries. Muslims ruled Spain for 700 years and India for 1000 years without the vast majority of the population converting to Islaam.

The largest Muslim country in the world today is Indonesia, having over 200 million citizens, never saw a Muslim soldier. Islaam spread there and in Malaysia and Philippines by trade. That was also the case of Islaam's spread in West African countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Chad and Niger. Also, Islaam is the fastest growing religion in America today with anywhere between 300 and 500 converts daily. This is taking place without any soldiers or even missionaries.

7 TIPS ON HOW TO BEGIN DA'WAH

1. WHAT DO YOU KNOW OR THINK ABOUT ISLAAM?

This question should be preceded by other general conversation. For example, ask how long the person has been in the country. If they have been in the country for a long time, this is a suitable question. If they have only just arrived, another approach is required. For example, one could offer to show them around, or invite them to a gathering, etc.

2. CURRENT ISSUES: WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HIJAAB OR THE WAR IN IRAQ?

Use current issues in the media as a means of discussing about Islaam. If they are open-minded and see the obvious injustice in the Hijaab ban and the Western invasion of Iraq based on non-existent WMDs, then the conversation can be steered to the media distortion of Islaam, etc. If they didn't understand the issues behind the Hijaab or the invasion of Iraq, they should be enlightened briefly and these issues linked to Islaam.

3. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING IN A MUSLIM COUNTRY?

Discuss the differences between being in their country and being here as a means to clarifying misconceptions about Islaam and Muslims. Find out their impressions about Muslims, and correct the negative images. Distinguish between what Muslims do and what they are supposed to do – i.e., Cultural Islaam and Islamic Culture.

4. HOW HAS YOUR IMPRESSION OF QATAR/THE GULF STATES CHANGED SINCE COMING HERE?

Usually Westerners and others have very negative images of this region and its citizens. The technological and social differences are often quite vast. Violence and backwardness are often to two main misconceptions. One may clarify the Islamic stance on violence and terrorism and stress that Islaam encourages scientific advancement. The issue that Islaam was spread mostly in times of peace (e.g., Indonesia) and that the Qur'aan prohibits compulsion in religion are good to relate in this context.

5. ARE YOU RELIGIOUS? WHAT DOES YOUR RELIGION SAY IS THE PURPOSE OF EXISTENCE/CREATION?

Find out the person's spiritual state. If they are religiously committed, then ask them to define, according to their scriptures – not according to their personal opinions, the reason for their existence. Most people have no answer. They never thought about it and their religious teachers and teachings don't spell it out clearly. Here, the clarity of purpose mentioned in the scripture, Qur'aan, may impress them and encourage them to read the Qur'aan. Otherwise, a discussion of purpose would be good.

6. WHY DO YOU WEAR A CROSS? WHY DO YOU KEEP THAT IDOL?

Ask questions about the person's religious symbols in order to introduce Islamic ideas in contrast to what the person believes. The goal being to bring out the false ideas the person holds and to compare them with Islaamic beliefs and practices. Or you may use other people's question to begin discussion. If they ask about your *hijaab* or your

Islaamic cap or gown, use the question to clarify misconceptions or to introduce them to some Islaamic concepts.

7. DISCUSS ISLAAM IN THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS.

If you are traveling with Muslims and sitting among non-Muslims, use the opportunity to discuss about basic Islaamic beliefs for their benefit. For example, one of you asks the others about the difference between God in Islaam and in Christianity. Or, less directly, one asks about the meanings of Soorah al-Faatihah and the others explain it or discuss it.

MORE THAN EIGHTY WAYS TO MAKE DA‘WAH

All praise is due to Allaah who expressed the highest praise for the “caller” to his religion saying: **“And who is better in speech than one who calls to Allaah and works righteousness and says: ‘Surely I am of the Muslims.’ ”** (41: 33). And may Allaah’s peace and blessings be on Prophet Muhammad, the role model, who said: “*Whoever calls to guidance will have a reward similar to that of one who follows it.*”[1]

Muslims know that Allaah is the one who honored them with the religion of Islaam and made them responsible for fulfilling the trust of spreading it. Furthermore, they know that they will be asked about this responsibility, as Allaah says: **“This is a reminder to you and your people and you will be asked (questioned).”** (43: 44) They also know that if they fulfill this trust and become a reason for the guidance of others to Almighty Allaah, they will receive a reward greater than they can possibly imagine, as the Almighty said: **“Say: Let them rejoice in Allaah’s grace and mercy, for it is better than what they accumulate.”** (10: 58) And the Prophet (°) said, *“For Allaah to guide someone by your hand is better for you than anything this world contains.*”[2]

It is from Allaah’s grace upon us in these times that there are many ways to give *da‘wah* (calling to Islaam) and sufficient opportunities for everyone to participate and benefit from its great rewards. One who calls to Islaam is obliged to choose the most suitable way for those whom he or she calls. Furthermore, the caller has to vary these methods according to the particular circumstances he finds himself in, as Prophet Noah and the prophets before him did.

The responsibility of the caller is to be aware of the various forms of invitation in order to facilitate his work. The caller should also direct his invitation to everyone, including his immediate family, relatives, servants, guests, neighbors, colleagues and his friends. He should also be aware of the various locations where the invitation can be given like mosques, prayer halls, schools, hospitals, prisons, parks, beaches and recreational areas, Hajj tents, hotels, residences, airports, bus stations, banquet halls, shopping centers, market places, barbershops, public buses, offices, lunch rooms, cafeterias, and restaurants. Places where new comers to the country frequent such as passport offices, duty free shopping areas, immigration offices, post offices, traffic police offices, police stations, tourist bureau, information counters in the various governmental departments and embassies.

Cooperation in *da‘wah* is also important as there are many others striving to give the invitation whose skills and experience may benefit you and yours may benefit them. Learning from their experiences will help you to be more creative and upgrade your knowledge and *da‘wah* skills. Consequently, the caller should eagerly encourage others to collaborate with others in *da‘wah* and to give their utmost in serving the religion, whether they are from his family or not. Futhermore, he or she should utilize a variety of *da‘wah* materials and advertisements to recruit others to this noble cause by jointly

[1] *Sahih Muslim,* vol. 3, p. 1050, no. 4665.
[2] *Sahih Al Bukhari,* vol. 4, pp. 156-7, no. 253.

printing books, pamphlets, and brochures, as well as copying tapes, CDs, video tapes, etc. and distributing them as widely as possible within his or her circle of friends as well as outside of the circle.

Since people are often at a loss as to how they should go about giving *da‘wah*, and use their ignorance as an excuse not to do anything, the following list of more than eighty suggestions have been compiled from among the many possible ways to give *da‘wah* in order to make the way easier:

At Home:

1. **Household library.** Prepare a collection of books, magazines and tapes according to what is suitable for the various age groups (with consideration of what are suitable for all the members of the family).
2. **Posters.** Make a bulletin board for the home on which announcements for Islaamic lectures and events can be posted in order to remind the family of important events and lectures.
3. **Family lessons.** Read from a book, listen to a tape or memorize a portion from the Qur’aan and *hadeeth* together as a group.
4. **Family Competitions.** Engage family members in Islaamic competitions and maybe the prize is writing the winner’s name on the honor roll in the house).
5. **Family Magazine.** Create a family magazine by having family members participate writing essays or in cutting articles and pictures related to Islaam from the magazines and newspapers which you bring home.
6. **Participation in Islaamic Social Work.** Have your brother or son accompany you to the prayers, lectures or to visit a sick person or a scholar or the offices of *Da‘wah*.
7. **Righteous Acts in Public.** Do some righteous acts in front of the family, such as prayer, reading Qur’aan and giving charity, as an example for them to learn from.

At the Mosque:

8. **Participation in the Wall Magazine.** In most mosques there are bulletin boards at the back with announcements and Islaamic posters. Contribute articles to the board and purchase beneficial and informative posters for it.
9. **Development of the Mosque’s Facilities and Programs.** Participate in developing the mosque’s *Da‘wah* facilities and activities such as its library, Qur’aan memorization classes and its contribution’s box.
10. **Providing Books and Tapes.** Collect good books, booklets, pamphlets and tapes from Islaamic charitable organizations and put them in various locations in the mosque. For example, it is possible to place the literature in the Qur’aan shelves and in particular the Qur’aanic commentaries and their translations in different languages.
11. **Advertisement for Mosque’s Programs.** Announce the topics and timings for new lectures and classes in the mosque and post advertisements for them on the bulletin boards and on the doors of the mosque.
12. **Lectures.** Invite a good lecturers know to you to give lectures at the mosque or contact organizations like the Awqaaf or other *Da‘wah* organizations to provide lecturers for your local mosque on a regular basis.

13. **Translation of Friday Khutbah.** Arrange with the Awqaaf for the translation of the Friday sermon into the languages of the majority of those who attend Jumu‘ah in your local mosque.
14. **Mosque Committee.** Participation in the mosque’s committee which organizes the mosque’s *Da‘wah* programs and its and social activities.

At School:

15. **Morning Assembly.** Help to prepare *da‘wah* oriented material for the morning assembly and the school’s morning broadcast.
16. **Bulletin Boards.** Prepare attractive posters advertising internal extra curricular activities as well as external Islaamic lectures and classes for the various bulletin boards around the school.
17. **Drama Activities.** Participate in the drama activity in the school by developing Islaamic plays and themes.
18. **Lectures.** Arrange for the visits of various speakers and callers to the school. Focus on open forums in which students are able to ask the questions which are most important to them, thereby making Islaam seem more relevant.
19. **Competitions.** Organize Islaamic and academic educational competitions between the students and schools and distribute Islaamic prizes. Use such occasions as a means to talk about the importance and responsibility of *da‘wah.*
20. **Facilitating Student Input.** Collect students’ suggestions and complaints and present them to the school authorities. Give full support to student opinions on important issues, especially those related to Islaam.
21. **Islaamic Library.** Help the Islamic studies department to develop a strong and varied section for Islaam in the school’s general library. Focus on Islaamic novels and stories of the Companions and others.
22. **Exhibitions and Expositions.** Participate in book and tape exhibitions or anti-drug epositions, etc. which are officially organized by the school.
23. **Islaamic Week.** Request that the school dedicate a week annually to Islaamic exhibitions, displays, posters, artifacts, videos, books and tapes.
24. **Summer Holidays.** Introduce Islaamic content in the summer vacation activities of the school.

At the Work Place:

25. **Da‘wah Posters.** Put up *Da‘wah* posters and announcements for Islaamic events on the office’s bulletin boards.
26. **Your Desk.** Keep *Da‘wah* material on your desk at all times, among your books, in a rack as well as on your own bulletin board.
27. **Tape Distribution.** Distribute tapes of recent lectures relevant to co-workers. Especially those with catchy titles that address materialism.
28. **Invitations.** Invite interested co-workers to lectures and other Islamic events, as well as to visit Islaamic *da‘wah* offices.
29. **Congregational Prayer.** Establish congregational prayer in the office or invite co-workers to accompany you to the nearby mosque.
30. **Islaamic Socialization.** Organize social gatherings and invite Islamic propagators to join you as informal guests.

31. **Open Discussions.** Encourage Islamic discussions during lunch and tea breaks.
32. **Islaamic Projects.** Gather other active Muslims in the office to initiate Islamic charitable projects on your job.
33. **The Islaamic Example.** Do your job to the best of your ability at all times as a good Islamic example to your co-workers.

General Means of Da‘wah:

34. **Da‘wah Posters.** Create or purchase a variety of beautiful eye-catching posters whose scenes match though-provoking Islaamic texts or suitable *Da‘wah* situations and put them in appropriate locations around the city.
35. **Muslim Greeting Cards.** Print and distribute congratulatory cards and Eed cards, as well as cards commemorating other occasions of Islaamic significance which contain beneficial *da‘wah* messages and slogans.
36. **Da‘wah Album**. Collect awe-inspiring pictures and powerful *Da‘wah* slogans in *da‘wah* albums which may be kept for visitors and guests or given as a gift.
37. **Marriage Invitation Cards.** Turn the cover of a useful pamphlet into a marriage invitation card as a means of reaching all who attend. For example, where people are accustomed to a number of un-Islaamic practices during marriage, a well-known booklet on the etiquette of marriage could become the marriage invitation card.
38. **Revision or Typing.** Request the person you wish to invite to Islaam to revise or type out a *da‘wah* article as a means of indirectly exposing them to the Islaamic information you wish to get across to them.
39. **Da‘wah Mobile.** Send *da‘wah* messages by mobile to the general public or by email to mass mailing lists as reminders for religious occasions or lectures, etc.
40. **The Internet.** Utilize the Internet for *da‘wah* conversations or participate in any of the many the chat rooms in which Islaam is being maligned on the net.
41. **The Media.** Participate in spreading the *Da‘wah* by developing and presenting radio and TV programs or writing Islaamic articles in local newspapers. These programs should be widely advertised through the many means of communication mentioned.
42. **Stickers.** Arrange for the posting of stickers containing beneficial Islaamic reminders in appropriate locations like the prayer for traveling and riding vehicles in buses, airplanes. Distribute stickers containing the supplications for various occasions like leaving and entering the home, the toilet, etc., for people to put around the home. Negotiate with hotels and other such institutions to post stickers with beneficial advice like the sticker showing the direction of the *Qiblah* in hotel rooms, etc, to remind residents of prayer and help them to do so properly.
43. **Schedules.** Post schedules of the prayer timings and *Ramadaan* fasting timings, on bulletin boards in suitable locations around the city as prayer reminders and guides for those fasting.
44. **Diaries and Agendas.** Publish or print diaries, agendas and educational schedules containing *Da‘wah* reminders as well as significant Islaamic dates and occasions.
45. **Calling Cards.** Print attractive calling cards with *Da‘wah* information and arrange to have shops include them with their products when giving them to their customers.

46. **Post Cards.** Design post cards with attractive local scenes or landmarks with brief Islaamic messages on the back. For example, a post card with a picture of a date farm could have on the back a Qur'aanic reference to the water cycle.
47. **The Da'wah Briefcase.** Purchase and distribute *Da'wah* briefcases manufactured with many pockets designed to hold leaflets, booklets and tapes in various languages for easy circulation.
48. **Magazine Subscriptions.** Give a subscription to an Islaamic magazine to someone as a gift or donate the amount of the subscription to a *Da'wah* office so it can choose someone to send it to.
49. **Collect Used Magazines and Books.** Start a project to collect used magazines and Islamic books, etc. from homes and institutions in order to ship them or distribute them where they are needed.
50. **Leaflets and Flyers.** Select *Da'wah* articles from books or lectures from tapes and reprint them as leaflets and flyers for various occasions like people going on Hajj or on vacation, or for expatriate workers, or for the sick, doctors and nurses, or for prisoners, for women and children, or for weddings, *Ramadaan* or Eed.
51. **Bill Advertisements.** Include brief Islaamic announcements and reminders on common utility bills like telephone or water and electricity bills as well as on supermarket bills.
52. **Islaamic Slogans.** Catchy Islaamic sayings or slogans can be printed on calendars, agendas, car sunscreens, plastic shopping bags and other similar items that are commonly circulated among the masses of people, with the agreement of their manufacturers and by providing those responsible with suitable sayings.
53. **Open Letters.** Prepare letters for specific categories of people. For example, letters may be directed to the neighbor of a mosque, to the mosque's *imaam*, to the public speaker, to the doctor, to the teacher, to the student, to a publisher, to a father, to a mother, to a husband, to a wife, to an employer, a trader, a consumer, a security guard, a prisoner or a traveler.
54. **Public Competitions.** Purchase and give away Islaamic books, tapes, CDs, DVDs, videos, etc. as prizes in general knowledge quiz competitions or programs specially designed for certain categories of knowledge like science or particular categories of people like high school students, etc.
55. **General Publications.** Arrange for the production of books, tapes and CDs about the stories and confessions of those who were astray and then were guided, as well as publications containing poems, plays and literary pieces and linguistic works, and the biographies of famous people, and modern business related work on topics like administration and communication, international politics and science and medical topics like the functions of the body etc, in order to reach groups that do not normally read purely religious books.
56. **Distribution of Da'wah Materials.** The various *Da'wah* offices should organize the weekly delivery of their flyers, books and tapes to houses and schools at certain times.
57. **Production Companies.** Approach companies and institutions that specialize in co-coordinating and holding major events and programs for big occasions such as marriages, and prepare special *da'wah* material for distribution at the events.

58. **The Da‘wah Car.** Purchase van type vehicles and write on them suitable phrases of *Da‘wah* and park them in public places in order to distribute a variety of audio and visual *Da‘wah* materials.
59. **Large Bill Boards.** Make neon signs or bill boards with *Da‘wah* messages and erect them in suitable places in the country to promote the *Da‘wah* and advertise activities and events.
60. **Sporting Events.** The Da‘wah Offices should participate in organizing sports events for adults and youths and include in the program *Da‘wah* related material for distribution among participants and onlookers as well as for winning teams and individuals.
61. **The Charity Clinic**. Doctors concerned about *da‘wah* should provide free medical checks up from a supportive private clinic for the general masses or for particular groups like those new Muslims and non-Muslims who study in the *Da‘wah* offices.
62. **Women’s Courses.** Write *Da‘wah* articles or slogans on the sidelines of course materials geared towards women’s needs and interests like cooking, home economics, child rearing, married life, home financing, managing house maids and housework, preparation for married life, breastfeeding or children’s illnesses, safety in the house and first aid.
63. **Charity Bazaars.** Hold charity bazaars, charity luncheons, etc. to raise donations for any one of the many worthy Islaamic causes. Include in the function Islaamic lectures addressing women’s issues as well as other general *da‘wah* issues.
64. **Award Functions.** Organize public functions in which tokens of appreciation are presented to scholars, callers, *Da‘wah* offices, religious magazines, Islamic tape stores and good websites, etc. to educate the masses about the importance of their *da‘wah* activities and to enlighten them to some relevant Islaamic issues through the speeches made at the events.
65. **Da‘wah Directory.** Prepare a the tourist’s *da‘wah* guide which shows the locations of the *Da‘wah* offices and associations, Islaamic libraries and Islamic studios, prominent mosques and Islaamic schools and universities, and locations and timings of ongoing religious circles, as well as the whereabouts of local scholars.
66. **Islaamic Exhibitions.** Arrange for book exhibitions by the major bookstores, cultural exhibitions by the Culture and Tourism Board or a cultural tent to visit schools and companies and participate in some of major science and technology expositions with the goal of *da‘wah* in mind.
67. **Da‘wah Website.** Establish a comprehensive *da‘wah* website catering to as many *da‘wah* needs as possible which would function as a think tank for Islaamic ideas and would entertain discussions and post rulings on specific questions related to *da‘wah*.
68. **Breaking Fast.** Introduce or participate in *da‘wah* project related to breaking fast in Ramadan or on Mondays and Thursdays throughout the year. Include brief talks to those present enlightening them about the unique aspects of fasting and its spiritual significance.

69. **Hajj and ‘Umrah.** Offer trips for Hajj and ‘Umrah to particular groups, especially new Muslims, for the purpose of *da‘wah* and implement programs designed to increase peoples’ awareness before, during and after Hajj.
70. **Transportation.** Provide your personal vehicle and time as alternative means of transportation for those needing help in getting to the various *Da‘wah* offices for classes, lectures or conferences.
71. **Da‘wah Warehouse.** Set up charitable *da‘wah* warehouses that collect and accept materials for *da‘wah* and make them accessible to schools and mosques and others at nominal prices.
72. **Da‘wah Offices.** Join the local offices of Da‘wah, introduce others to them, and visit them regularly in order to participate in their programs and to support and encourage those working in them.
73. **Supplications.** Make supplications on various occasions as a way of calling others to Allaah, like saying to someone involved in *haraam,* “May Allah save you from the fire,” or to someone doing a praiseworthy act, “I ask Allah to bring us together in Paradise with the Prophet,” or for you to pray for a student saying, “I ask Allaah to give you success in the tests of this world and the next.”
74. **Personal Visits.** Visit those who are neglectful of their prayers close to the time of the call to prayer so that he may accompany you to the mosque.
75. **Declaration of Islaam.** Bring new Muslims to the local Friday mosque and have him openly declare his Islaam after the Friday prayer following a brief story about his way to Islaam. And follow the ceremony by pointing out ways that those present can help others find Islaam. In the case of female converts, she may declare her Islaam at a girl’s school or women’s association, etc.
76. **Public Transportation.** Provide public and private transportation companies, cab companies with attractive and appropriate posters, stickers, and tapes, and later give awards to their management for their cooperation with the Da‘wah offices.
77. **Da‘wah Booths**. Set up in the major shopping malls, supermarkets and other locations in which large numbers of the public gather *da‘wah* booths, stalls and tables equipped with large screen televisions and distribute pamphlets, booklets, audio tapes, videos, CDs, VCDs, etc.
78. **Telephone Da‘wah.** Record various brief *da‘wah* subjects to be played telephone systems when callers are put on hold. The telephone can also be used to answer Islaamic questions and to provide consultation.
79. **Arabic Language Courses.** Run programs for learning conversational and grammatical Arabic language either as courses or through books or tapes at the local *da‘wah* center or at people’s work place, if it is more convenient.
80. **Islaamic Courses.** Offer general Islaamic courses at local *da‘wah* offices, mosques, or public lecture halls covering topics from the major Islaamic disciplines as well as intensive courses for those specializing in *da‘wah*.
81. **Da‘wah Day.** Hold an open day of *da‘wah* with a variety of programs or special educational ones which are presented during the whole day catering to men and women, locals as well as expatriates. For the expatriates, the programs could be in one of the major languages of the expatriate community each day. Articles should be written a month in advance announcing *da‘wah* day and flyers and posters

should be distributed all mosques and prayer halls, schools, malls, etc. so that it may be the talk of the people for that month.

May Allaah make you and us guides for others and grant us a place among those who are themselves rightly guided.

DA‘WAH

TO ATHEISTIS,

DEISTS AND

AGNOSTICS

DA'WAH TO THE ATHEISTS AND DEISTS

Atheist is one who believes that there is no God.

> A little philosophy inclineth men's minds to *atheism*, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds to religion – Bacon
>
> By night an *atheist* half believes a God – Young (Webster's, p. 118)

Deism. 1. The belief that God exists and created the world but thereafter assumed no control over it or the lives of people.
2. In philosophy, the belief that reason is sufficient to prove the existence of God, with the consequent rejection of revelation and authority. (Webster's, p. 479)

Agnostic. One who thinks it is impossible to know whether there is a God or a future life, or anything beyond material phenomena. The name was suggested by Huxley in 1869.
Agnosticism. In theology, the doctrine that God is unknown and unknowable. 3. In philosophy, the doctrine that a first cause and the essential nature of things are unknowable to man.

> By *agnosticism*, I understand a theory of things which abstains from either affirming or denying the existence of God; all it undertakes to affirm is that, upon existing evidence, the being of God is unknown. – G. J. Romanes (Webster's, p. 37)

Belief in God's existence.

First and foremost, it should be noted that belief in God's existence is not illogical, as modern atheists would have mankind believe. Ancient Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle rationally concluded that God must exist. Plato () argued from design that there must be a designer. When human beings come across footprints on a beach, they immediately conclude that a human being had walked by there some time previously. It would be quite illogical to imagine that the waves from the sea settled in the sand and by chance produced a depressions looking exactly like human footprints.

Consequently, it is not surprising to find that all human societies throughout human history, with very few exceptions, have believed in the existence of God. It is only in the 20th century that whole societies have been established based on the denial of God's existence. Russia and China and states under their control systematically taught atheism in all of their institutions of learning. However, after the fall of the soviet system and the abandonment of communist economics in China, the resurgence of religion in both countries has been phenomenal.

Anthropologists and psychologists have long held that belief in God was acquired by nurture. This was a natural result of their Darwinian views, which considered humans essentially animals, and thus the absence of religion among apes indicated that it must be man-made. In fact Freud proposed that the oedipal-complex was the basis of human belief in God. Yet, some modern researchers increasingly leaned to the conclusion that

belief in God must be natural for it to be so wide-spread. In 1997 experimental evidence for the inherent belief in God was found.

‘God spot’ is found in brain

by Steve Connor
Science Correspondent

SCIENTISTS believed they have discovered a “God module” in the brain which could be responsible for man’s evolutionary instinct to believe in religion.

A study of epileptics who are known to have profoundly spiritual experiences has located a circuit of nerves in the front of the brain which appears to become electrically active when they think about God.

The scientists said that although the research and its conclusions are preliminary, initial results suggest that the phenomenon of religious belief is “hard-wired” into the brain.

Epileptic patients who suffer from seizures of the brain’s frontal lobe said they frequently experience intense mystical episodes and often become obsessed with religious spirituality.

A team of neuroscientists from the University of California at San Diego said the most intriguing explanation is that the seizure causes an over-stimulation of the nerves in a part of the brain dubbed the “God module.”

“There may be dedicated neural machinery in the temporal lobes concerned with religion. This may have evolved to impose order and stability on society,” the team reported at a conference last week The results indicate that whether a person believes in a religion or even in. God may depend on how enhanced is this part of the brain’s electrical circuitry, the scientists said

Dr. Vilayanur Ramachandran, head of the research team, head of the research team, said the study involved comparing epileptic patients with normal people and a group who said they were intensely religious.

Electrical monitors on their skin—a standard test for activity—in the brain’s temporal lobes—showed that the epileptics and the deeply religious displayed a similar res-ponse when shown words invoking spiritual belief.

Evolutionary scientists have suggested that belief in God, which is a common trait found in human societies around the world and throughout history, may be built into the brain’s complex electrical circuitry as a Darwinian adaptation to encourage co-operation between individuals.

If the research is correct and a “God module” exists, then it might suggest that individuals who are atheists could have a differently configured neural circuit.

A spokesman for Richard Harries, the Bishop of Oxford, said whether there is a “God module” is a question for scientists, not theo-logians. “It would not be surprising if God had created us with a physical facility for belief,” he said.[1]

Consequently, of the many verses in the Qur’aan addressing God’s attributes, only few address His existence. In *Soorah at-Toor* (52):35-6, Allaah said:

F أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَل لاَ يُوقِنُونَ E

“Were they created from nothing or did they create themselves. Or did they create the heavens and earth? Indeed, they are uncertain.”

Logic and reason is used to convince humans that there must be a Creator. Allaah gives the three logical possibilities for human creation in these verses.

[1] *The Sunday Times*, 2 Nov. 97, p. 1-9.

a) Humans were created from nothing or by nothing. This proposal violates basic reason. Something cannot come from nothing. Nothing cannot create something.

b) Humans created themselves. This is also an illogical and contradictory proposition. To create ones' self, one must already exist. But to be created one must first not exist.

c) Humans were created by something already created. This implies in infinite regression of causes which ultimately means that humans do not exist. If C1 were caused by C2, and C2 by C3 to CN, then C1 cannot exist unless C2 does, etc. And CN means that it has no beginning. Consequently, C1 cannot exist. In other words, if human existence is preceded by an infinite amount of causes requiring an infinite amount of time to take place, it is the same as saying that they will never take place. Human existence thus becomes impossible. The Greek philosopher Aristotle () argued similarly that the infinite regression of the cause and effect chain was impossible.

The only remaining possibility is that humans and other created things were created by a being which is not itself created.

Belief in God includes the belief that God alone is the Creator and Sustainer of this world.

Nothing takes place in the universe without His permission. No good can be obtained nor harm avoided unless Allaah decrees it. Humans are enjoined to **seek refuge in the Lord of the Dawn from the evil of what He created**.[2] Allaah does not attribute evil directly to Himself, because He is Good and all which comes from His is Good. The evil which comes from Allaah is relative evil. It may be good from other perspectives but evil in one perspective. For example, sunshine is essential for plants to grow and synthesize chlorophyll, yet it causes the rivers and lakes to dry up leading to drought, famine and death. Rain is also essential for plants to grow, yet it also causes floods, drowning and death. Pure evil, on the other hand, is a result of human activity. Humans think evil and, if Allaah permits it, they do evil. Allaah on the other hand does not oppress anyone.

E وَلاَ يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَداً F

"Your Lord does no wrong to anyone." Soorah al-Kahf (18):49

The evil which humans do is by Allaah's permission, so that that degree it is from Allaah. But humans are responsible for their evil because it is a product of their choice. Regarding God's permission, Muslim scholars of the past have distinguished between

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[2]Soorah al-Falaq (113):1-2.

God's wish and His will. His wish is sometimes referred to as *His Legal Wish,* meaning that He wishes for humans Islaam; the right way of life consisting of submission to whatever God has instructed. However, He also gave humans the ability to accept His wish or reject it. Consequently, humans may go against God's Legal Wish. His will, on the other hand, is referred to as *His Creational Will*, meaning that what takes place is by his permission alone. Among the things which take place are events beyond human will and events which are in accordance with human will. For example, humans are governed by the laws of "nature" which they cannot escape. If one jumps up, he or she must fall back down. If one's knee is struck by the doctor, the foot kicks out, no matter how hard the mind fights the reaction. Humans cannot go against Allaah's Creational Will.

When those who deny God's existence are asked why they are successful and others who have made similar or greater efforts are not, they reply that it is due to their good-fortune and the others' bad fortune. And when human life is analyzed it is easily concluded that all of it is controlled by good and bad luck. Consequently, life is looked at as being controlled by the goddess of chance, *Tyche*, in Greek religion, and *Fortuna* in Roman. Religious rites involve, knocking on wood, crossing fingers, wearing amulets like four-leaf clovers, rabbits' feet, and horse shoes, while, at the same time, avoiding black cats, breaking mirrors, spilling salt, and the number 13. The goddess of fortune is more appealing to Western atheism because it is a blind force which does not require obedience nor assign obligations.

As a result of modern Western Civilization's preoccupation with good luck, business men like Donald Trump, have been reported to fly over *Feng Shui* experts from Main-land China to guide their architects in the design of their buildings. And the commander of Apollo 13 responded to questions about any doubts he had concerning the lift-off by insisting that he should have known it was going to happen because the flight was Apollo number 13, which took off at 1300 hours (i.e. 1 o'clock) on Friday the 13^{th}. Likewise, most high rise hotels, apartment buildings and office blocks do not have 13^{th} floors, nor are houses numbered 13. Instead, floor 13 is renamed 14, and house 13 is labeled 12 ½.

Belief in Allaah requires the purification of the heart from any dependency on these and similar superstitions.

Belief in God also means that God alone deserves human worship.

From an Islamic perspective, worship is not merely praising, honoring and offering sacrifices to a deity. To call on the deity for help is a fundamental part of worship. Consequently, calling on anyone other than Allaah in prayer is to worship them. The Prophet's companion, Nu'maan ibn Basheer quoted him as saying, "[*Calling on anyone*

in] prayer is worship."[3] If one believes that nothing takes place except by God's will alone, it makes no sense to call on anyone other than God.[4]

Design Indicates a Designer

The variety and complexity of the intricate systems which constitute the fabric of both human beings and the world in which they exist indicate that there must have been a Supreme Being who created them. Design indicates a designer. When human beings come across footprints on a beach, they immediately conclude that a human being had walked by there some time previously. No one imagines that the waves from the sea settled in the sand and by chance produced a depression looking exactly like human footprints. Nor do humans instinctively conclude that they were brought into existence without a purpose. Since purposeful action is a natural product of human intelligence, humans conclude that the Supreme Intelligent Being who created them must have done so for a specific purpose. Therefore, human beings need to know the purpose for their existence in order to make sense of this life and to do what is ultimately beneficial for them.

Throughout the ages, however, there has been a minority among humans who have denied the existence of God. Matter, in their opinion, is eternal and mankind is merely a chance product of accidental combinations of its elements. Consequently, to them, the question "Why did God create man?" had and still has no answer. According to them, there simply is no purpose to existence. However, the vast majority of humankind over the ages have believed and continue to believe in the existence of a Supreme Being who created this world with a purpose. For them, it was and still is important to know about the Creator and the purpose for which He created human beings.[5]

Many others, as was previously mentioned, claimed and continue to claim that there is no purpose at all. Human existence is merely a product of chance. There can be no purpose if life evolved from inanimate matter which only became animate by pure luck. Humankind's supposed 'cousins', the monkey and apes are not bothered with questions of existence, so why should human beings be bothered with them?[6]

Darwinism Fails

The attempt to explain the origin of life using Darwin's theory fails at every step. The first step of creating the precursors of life from non-living chemicals has not been experimentally replicated.

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[3] *Sunan Abu Dawud,* vol. 1, p. 387, no. 1474 and authenticated in Sa*h*ee*h* *Sunan Abee Daawood,* vol.1, p. , no..

[4] *The Moral Foundations of Islamic Culture,* pp.

[5] *The Purpose of Creation,* pp. 5-6.

[6] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

Stage One: From inorganic to organic – from the gases which presumably surrounded earth to the simplest amino acids, containing about ten atoms, which are the most basic of the biochemical universals. Experimentally, Stanley Miller in the United States showed in 1953 that by passing an electrical discharge through the appropriate gases, surprisingly large amounts of amino acids were formed. The experiments are acknowledged as a major break through in understanding how life got under way. Since then other essential chemicals have been synthesized. However, until today, five of the twenty amino acids common to all living beings have resisted human attempts to create them artificially. A Russian biochemist by the name of Aleksandr Oparin (1894-1980)[7] first proposed in 1924 a model of the atmosphere of the primitive earth free of oxygen (oxygen literally eats up any primitive organic chemicals such as amino acids) containing hydrogen, methane, ammonia and water. Life on earth is shielded from certain death due to ultraviolet cosmic rays by the ozone layer, which blankets the earth between fifteen and thirty miles above the surface. Without oxygen in the atmosphere of the primitive there would have been no ozone layer and the first living organisms would have been wiped out by cosmic rays, and with oxygen present, the first amino acid could not have been produced. Imaginative and elaborate solutions have been written to solve this riddle. But for every suggestion, there is an insurmountable objection.

Stage Two: Assuming that there was (around 4 billion years ago) a sea with a 10% solution of amino acids, sugars, phosphates, and so on, two major steps have to take place simultaneously. Amino acids must link together to form proteins and other chemicals must join up to make nucleic acids, including the vital DNA. Proteins depend on DNA for their formation and DNA cannot form without pre-existing protein. Nor is it relatively easy chemistry. Proteins are highly complex molecules. Where an amino acid typically has ten atoms, a protein may have thousands.

Stage Three: The formation of the nucleus.

Stage Four: The formation of the cell wall.

Deism. 1. The belief that God exists and created the world but thereafter assumed no control over it or the lives of people.

2. In philosophy, the belief that reason is sufficient to prove the existence of God, with the consequent rejection of revelation and authority. (Webster's, p. 479)

For deists, there is no need to worship because our purpose in this world is unknown. We find our own purposes and whatever we do is okay as long as we do not harm others. The way to deal with this belief is to stress that the need to worship is a natural instinct in all human beings.

FITRAH
It is Natural to Believe in God

[7] Oparin's definitive work was *The Origin of Life*, 3rd rev. ed. 1957.

The Prophet (r) related that when Allaah created Aadam, He took a covenant from him in a place called Na‘maan on the day of ‘Arafah.[8] Then He extracted from him all of his descendants who would be born until the end of the world, generation after generation, and spread them out in front of Him in order to take a covenant from them also. He spoke to them face to face saying: “Am I not your Lord?” and they all replied, “Yes, we testify to it.” Allaah then explained why He had all of mankind bear witness that He was their creator and only true God worthy of worship. He said, “That was in case you (mankind) should say on the Day of Resurrection, “Surely we were unaware of all this. We had no idea that You, Allaah, were our God. No one told us that we were supposed to worship You alone.” Allaah went on to explain that it was also in case some people would say: “It was our ancestors who made partners (with Allaah) and we are only their descendants; will You, then destroy us for what those liars did?[9] This was the Prophet’s (r) explanation of the Qur’anic verse in which Allaah said:

{وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ . أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ}

“When your Lord drew forth from the loins of the children of Aadam their descendant and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): ‘Am I not your Lord?’ they said, ‘Yes, we testify to it.’ (This) in case you say should say on the Day of Judgement, ‘We were unaware of this.” Or in case you should say, ‘It was our ancestors who made partners (with Allaah) and we are only their descendants. Will you then destroy us for what those liars did?’” Soorah al-A‘raaf, (7):172-3.

The verse and prophetic explanation confirm the fact that everyone is responsible for belief in God and on the Day of Judgement excuses will not be accepted. Every human being has the belief in God imprinted on his soul and Allaah shows every idolator, during the course of his life, signs that his idol is not God. Hence, every sane human being is required to believe in One God who is without partners.

Man’s Natural Disposition : the *Fitrah*

Since Allaah made all human beings wear to His Godhood when He created Aadam, this oath is printed on the human soul even before it enters the fetus in the fifth month of pregnancy. So when a child is born, it has with it a natural belief in Allaah. This natural belief is called in Arabic the *fitrah.*[10] If the child were left alone, it would grow up aware of Allaah in His unity, but all children are affected by the pressures of their environment whether directly or indirectly. The Prophet (r) reported that Allaah said, *“I*

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[8] The 9th of the 12th lunar month known as Dhul-Hijjah.

[9] Soorah al-A‘raaf, (7):172-3. The hadeeth is from a *saheeh* (authentic) narration of Ibn ‘Abbaas collected by Ahmad. See al-Albaanee’s *Silsilah al-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah,* (Kuwait: ad-Daar as-Salafeeyah and Amman: al-Maktabah al-Islaameeyah, 2nd ed., 1983) vol.4, p.158, no.1623.

[10] *Al-‘Aqeedah at-Tahaaweeyah,* (8th ed., 1984), p.245.

created My servants in the right religion but the devils made them go astray."[11] The Prophet (r) also said, *"Each child is born in a state of "fitrah", but his parents make him a Jew or a Christian. It is like the way an animal gives birth to a normal offspring. Have you noticed any (young animal) born mutilated before you mutilate them?"*[12] So just as the child's body submits to the physical laws which Allaah has put in nature, its soul also submits naturally to the fact that Allaah is its Lord and Creator. However, its parents try to make it follow their own way and the child is not strong enough in the early stages of its life to resist or oppose its parents.

Humans Created with a Need to Worship

Allaah created humans with a need to worship to compliment their natural belief in God. The first command in the Qur'aan is to worship:

يَآأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

"O human kind! Worship your Lord, Who created you and those before you so that you may become pious." (*Soorah al-Baqarah,* 2: 21)

Humans everywhere, in every corner of the earth, in every era are involved in worshipping God. The worship may be distorted in form and content. But, nevertheless, they are obsessed with worshipping God.

Times of Crises

Even those who deny God, when death overtakes them at the point of death or calamity the call out for God.

إِذَآ أَدْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ قَالَ آمَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ الَّذِي آمَنَتْ بِهِ بَنُوا إِسْرَآئِيلَ وَأَنَاْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

"When being drowned caught him, he cried: 'I believe that none has the right to be worshipped but He in whom the Children of Israa'eel believe. And I am one of the Muslims." (*Soorah Younus,* 10: 90)

وَإِذَآ أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى ٱلإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَئَا بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُو دُعَآءٍ عَرِيضٍ

"When I show favor to a human being, he withdraws and turns away; but when evil touches him, his supplications become long." (*Soorah Fussilat,* 41: 51)

وَجَحَدُواْ بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَآ أَنْفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا

"They denied them [the signs] wrongfully and arrogantly, though their own selves were convinced of them." (*Soorah an-Naml,* 27: 14)

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[11] *Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), vol.4, p.1488, no.6853.

[12] Collected by Muslim, (*Sahih Muslim* (English Trans.), vol.4, p.1398, no.6423) and al-Bukhaaree (*Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Arabic-English), vol.8, pp.389-90, no.597).

Yusuf Islam mentioned that the first time he reached out for God was when he was swimming and started to drown a voice welled up from inside him: “O God! Save me and I’ll be good.”

The atheist on a Boeing 747 sees an engine fall of one of the wings and the plane turns downward in a death dive, screams out: “O God! O God! O God!”

SIMPLE STEPS FOR DA’WAH TO DEISTS, ATHEISTS & AGNONSTICS

DEIST: CONFUSED
1. Clear Doubts: Find out the reason for their confused beliefs: Bad experiences, etc.
Focus on *Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyyah* (Unity of Lordship and Dominion) followed by *Tawheed al-‘Ibaadah* (Unity of Worship)

Deist: If Islaam is good for you, that is fine. The most important thing is to be good.
Q: How do you define “good”?

Deist: I can’t accept organized religion. It’s full of corruption.
Q: Would you prefer a disorganized religion of your own making?

Deist: God is Love.
Q: Should he Love Hitler, Pol Pot, Ghengis Khan, etc.?

Deist: What kind of God would put good people in the hell fire? Is Mother Theresa going to Hell?
Q: Your focus is on the rights of people, but what about the rights of Allaah? The purpose for which you were created?

2. Explain Purpose: Creation is for a reason and is based on reason. A God who creates humankind and does not inform them of their purpose and what He wants from them is not a very wise, nor a very merciful God.

3. Help them find the courage to submit and surrender themselves; to place their foreheads on the ground.

4. Encourage them, as the Prophet (°) said to Mu‘aath concerning the rights of the servants on Allaah, that He put them in paradise if they worship Him alone.

ATHEISTS: ARROGANT
True atheists are few in the world. Most people are either deists or agnostics. The true atheists heart is in complete darkness, a truly evil state. It is much more difficult to reach a true atheist than those who do worship false gods, whether they worship human beings or idols or animals. At least, they recognize the need to worship.

1. Clear Doubts: Find out the reason for their disbeliefs: Bad experiences, etc.

Focus on *Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyyah* (Unity of Lordship and Dominion) followed by *Tawheed al-'Ibaadah* (Unity of Worship)

2. Use Qur'aanic Arguments to prove God's existence. Establish God's existence or at least the possibility of His existence through the logical arguments mentioned in the Qur'aan.

AGNOSTICISM: LAZINESS

1. Prove God's existence. The agnostic starts from the premise that he does not know whether there is a God or not and that it is unknowable. Question why they believe it is unknowable.

2. Motivate. The agnostic says, "What does it matter whether there is a God or not? I really don't care." Discuss the meaninglessness of life without purpose and the need to worship which all human beings display, in one way or another

DA‘WAH

TO

CHRISTIANS

Da‘wah to Christians

There are two main sects of Christians: Catholics and Protestants, and three main heretical sects: Jehovah’s Witness, Seventh Day Adventists, and Mormons.

Catholics are the oldest – the earliest split was the Eastern Orthodox (Greek and Russian Orthodox churches have different organizational structure, but essential beliefs the same).

Protestants split over Catholic hierarchy: Pope, bishops, etc and saint worship. Martin Luther (1483-1546) and Calvin (1509-1564) lead a reform movement, which later became known as the Protestant movement. It rejected the accumulated rites, rituals and hierarchy of Roman Catholicism in an attempt to return to a purer form of Christianity. After a bitter struggle with church leaders leading to the excommunication of many reformers, a number of communities throughout Europe broke off and formed new churches in which Mary, the mother of Jesus, was no longer worshipped, and intercession through saints was no longer sought. Priests were allowed to marry, and the infallibility of the authority of the Pope was totally rejected. Rites like communion, in which little pieces of bread were served to the congregation in the belief that the pieces were somehow transformed into the body of Jesus Christ, were dropped along with the use of Latin in church rites.

Scriptural Difference
The Protestant Bible has seven less books than that of the Catholics.

Mormons (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

4.5 Million followers with 30,000 missionaries gathering 200,000 converts yearly (1980 figures)

Founder: Joseph Smith (1805-1844 killed)
1822 Angel Moroni came
Book of Mormon published 1830

Smith’s closest disciple, Brigam Young (1801-1877), took followers to Utah, and took 25 wives and promoted unrestricted polygamy, until the USA government threatened to revoke statehood. Mr. Young received revelation that polygamy was abrogated.

Unusual Beliefs
Adam actually God incarnated who came to Eden (in Missouri) with one of his heavenly wives, Eve. Had sexual relations with Mary to produce Jesus.
God physically a huge man along with mother-wife begat all human spirits
Until 1978 blacks could not enter the priesthood (age 14 males enter Aaronic priesthood and at age 20 they enter the higher office of Melchezdec), thus all 17 temples of the sect were off-limits to blacks. Then First President, Spencer Kimball got revelation to include blacks.

Seventh Day Adventism

William Miller (1782-1849) calculated end of the world between 21March 1843 and 21 March 1844 (followers called Millerites)
Samuel Snow later recalculates the date as Oct. 22, 1844.
After the "Great Disappointment" remnants gather under Hiram Edson, Joseph Bates and Ellen White (1827-1950)

Unusual Beliefs

1844 Christ entered heavenly sanctuary to judge sins of living and dead
Ellen White a true prophet
Sabbath – Seventh day (Saturday)
No pork, alcohol or tobacco

Jehovah's Witness

4.1 million followers, 200,000 converts yearly

Founder: Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916) a former Millerite and Christadelphian
Rejected eternal punishment
Started *Watchtower* 1879 – informal following in the millions, but organized only a distributorship of tracts (100,000 books and 800,000 magazines printed daily)
Followers called: Bible Students
Joseph F. Rutherford (1869-1942) lawyer took over and officially named group "Jehovah's Witnesses" in 1931

Unusual Beliefs

Jesus not God, but son of God and His first creation.
Souls not separate from body
No hell
Tithing
World's end predicted in 1914, 1918, 1920, 1925, 1941, 1975
(6,000 year to the end of the world recalculated from Eve's creation who's date of creation unrevealed currently)

The term "Jehovah" is not found in the Hebrew Bible – only in the Jehovah's Witness translation "The New World Bible".
Jewish custom to avoid pronouncing the divine name led them to write *yhwh* (Yahweh) in texts and read *adonai* (the Lord). In ignorance, later the vowels of *adonai* combined with the tetragrammaton to get Jehovah.

Born Again Christians

Among Mainstream Christians the most active in missionary work are the Charismatic Groups Commonly know as "Born Again" Christians – emphasize the gifts of the Holy Spirit
Stress is laid on reading the Bible

They consider mainstream Christians as not true Christians because they are not “born” of the Holy Spirit
First appeared among Protestants in 1960 and among Roman Catholics in 1966
Origins in Pentecostalism (1901 John Wesley and John Fletcher) in which Baptism in the Holy Spirit was stressed, and Glossalia (speaking in tongues) was practiced.
Approved by Pope Paul VI in 1973.

Consequently, one should be familiar with whom one is inviting to Islaam.

The Unifying Belief: Trinity
The unifying belief of mainstream Christianity is the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost/Spirit, three Gods in One. It is officially called the Nicene Creed and was agreed upon in a meeting of bishops in Nicea which took place in 325 CE. Bishops, like Arius, and others who supported Unitarianism and opposed the Trinitarian concept and the divinity of Jesus, where subsequently declared heretics, their followers hunted down, tortured and burned at the stake, and their gospels burned.

The Bible
Most Christians have not read the Bible, many have read small parts, most have only heard sections or verses mentioned in Church sermons. Their belief in Christian theology is most often very weak. Often times they have their own interpretations, thus, it is best to find out the status of their beliefs prior to beginning discussion, if possible.

The basic concept of Christianity: **God bore a son who was Himself and He allowed Himself to be sacrificed to Himself to free humankind of their sins**.

A Simple Approach

Logic: A=B, B=C, therefore A=C
Ask the Christian: “Could you ever become God?”
He should reply: “No, because I am a human being.”
Ask the Christian: “Was Jesus a human being?”
He should reply: “Yes.”
Inform the Christian: “Therefore, he could never be God.”

The Baby God
Christian insists that Jesus was the son of God, but that he and God are one and the same.
Inform the Christian: “Cows have calves; little cows. Cats have kittens; little cats. Humans have children; little humans. When God has a son, what is he? A little God? If so, you have two Gods.”

For Catholics (Most Filipinos) who say: “Jesus was the son of God and not God.”
Ask the Catholic: “Don’t you say: Holy Mary Mother of God in your novena?”
He should reply: “Yes”
Ask the Catholic: “If Mary was the Mother of God, what was her son but a god?”
Ask the Catholic: “Where is Mary referred to as Mother of God in the New Testament?”

Ask the Catholic: “Can God have a mother?”

Distinguish between Jesus and God

Ask the Christian: “When Jesus prayed, to whom did he pray? Himself?”
Ask the Christian: “When Jesus was resurrected, according to your beliefs, where is he now? Sitting on the right hand of God? If so, how could he be God?”

If God is able to do anything, He could become a Man and have a Son
Logically speaking, the answer is no because the concept of God becoming man contradicts the basic meaning of the term “God.” People commonly say that God is able to do all things; whatever He wants to do, He can do. In the Bible of Christians it is said, “… through God all things are possible (Matthew, 19: 26; Mark 10: 27, 14: 36).” The Qur’aan of Muslims states, “Indeed, Allah (God) is able to do all things (Qur’aan, 2: 20),” and the Hindu scriptures carry texts of similar meanings.

All the major religious texts contain general expressions regarding the basic concept of God’s omnipotence. He is Greater than all things, and through Him all things are possible. If this general concept is to be translated into practical terms, one has to first identify and understand the basic attributes of God. Most societies perceive God as an eternal being without beginning or end. If, on the basis that God is able to do all things, and it were asked whether God could die, what would be the answer? Since dying is part of “all things,” can it be said, “If He wants to?” Of course this cannot be said. So, there is a problem here. God is defined as being ever-living, without end, and dying means “coming to an end.” Consequently, to ask if He can die is actually a nonsensical question. It is self-contradictory. Similarly, to ask whether God can be born, is also absurd because God has already been defined as eternal, having no beginning. Being born means having a beginning, coming into existence after not existing. In this same vein, atheist philosophers enjoy asking theists: “Can God create a stone too heavy for Him to lift?” If the theist says yes, it means that God can create something greater than Himself. And if he says no, it means that God is unable to do all things.

Therefore, the term “all things” in the phrase “God is able to do all things” excludes the absurdities. It cannot include things that contradict His divine attributes; things that would make Him less than God, like, forgetting, sleeping, repenting, growing, eating, etc. Instead, it includes only “all things” that are consistent with Him being God. This is what the statement “God is able to do all things” means. It cannot be understood in the absolute sense; it must be qualified.

The claim that God became man is also an absurdity. It is not befitting of God to take on human characteristics because it means that the Creator has become His creation. However, the creation is a product of the creative act of the Creator. If the Creator became His creation, it would mean that the Creator created Himself, which is an obvious absurdity. To be created, He would first have to not exist, and, if He did not exist, how could He then create? Furthermore, if He were created, it would mean that He had a beginning, which also contradicts His being eternal. By definition creation is in need of a creator. For created beings to exist they must have a creator to bring them into existence.

God cannot need a creator because God is the Creator. Thus, there is an obvious contradiction in terms. The claim that God became His creation implies that He would need a creator, which is a ludicrous concept. It contradicts the fundamental concept of God being uncreated, needing no creator and being the Creator.

Jesus' Miracles

Many Christians are under the impression that Jesus' miracles were unique to himself and thus constitute evidence for his divinity. However, the majority of Jesus' miracles are recorded in the Old Testaments as having been done by earlier Prophets.

Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fishes.	Elisha fed 100 people with twenty barley loaves and a few ears of corn (II Kings 4:44)
Jesus healed lepers.	Elisha cured Naaman the leper (II Kings 5:14).
Jesus caused the blind to see.	Elisha caused the blind to see (II Kings 6:17&20).
Jesus raised the dead.	Elijah did the same (I Kings 17:22). So did Elisha (II Kings 4:34). Even Elisha's bones could restore the dead (II Kings 13:21).
Jesus walked on water.	Moses and his people crossed the dead sea (Exodus 14:22).

Furthermore, there are also texts in the New Testament which confirm that Jesus did not act on his own. Jesus is quoted in John 5:30, as saying: "I can of mine own self do nothing..." and in Luke 11:20, as saying, "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you." In Acts 2:22, Paul writes: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know..."

Jesus the "Son of God"

Another of the evidences used for Jesus' divinity is the application of the title "Son of God" to Jesus. It should first be noted that nowhere in the Gospels does Jesus actually call himself "Son of God".[1] Instead, he is recorded to have repeatedly called himself

[1] In the New Testament Book of Acts, there are several outlines of speeches of the early disciples of Jesus, speeches which date from the year 33 CE, almost forty years before the Four Gospels were written. In one of these discourses, Jesus is referred to specifically as *andra apo tou theou:* "a *man* from God." (Acts 2:22). Not once do these early confessions of faith use the expression *wios tou theou:* "Son of God", but they do speak several times of Jesus as God's servant and prophet (Acts 3:13, 22, 23, 26). The significance of these speeches is that they accurately reflect the original belief and terminology of the disciples, before the belief and terminology were evolved under the influence of Roman religion and Greek philosophy. They reflect a tradition which is older than that used by the Four Gospels, in which Jesus is not invested with godship or divine sonship. (*Bible Studies From a Muslim Perspective,* p. 12).

“Son of man” (e.g. Luke 9:22) innumerable times. And in Luke 4:41, he actually rejected being called “Son of God”: “And demons also came out of many, crying, ‘You are the Son of God!’ But he rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.” However, there are numerous places in the Old Testament where this title has been given to others.

God called Israel (Prophet Jacob) His “son” when He instructed Prophet Moses to go to Pharaoh in Exodus 4:22-23, “22 And you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Israel is my first-born son, 23and I say to you , ‘Let my son go that he may serve me.’ ” ’ ”[2]

In 2nd Samuel 8:13-14, God calls Prophet Solomon His son, “13 He [Solomon] shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14I will be his father, and he shall be my son.”

God promises to make Prophet David His son in Psalms 89:26-27, “26 He shall cry unto me, ‘Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation,’ 27Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.”[3]

Angels are referred to as “sons of God” in The Book of Job 1:6, “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.”[4]

In the New Testament, there are many references to “sons of God” other than Jesus. For example, when the author of the Gospel according to Luke listed Jesus’ ancestors back to Adam, he wrote: “The son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.”[5]

Some claim that what is unique in the case of Jesus, is that he is the only begotten[6] Son of God, while the others are merely “sons of God”. However, God is recorded as saying to Prophet David, in Psalms 2:7, “I will tell the decree of the Lord: He said to me, ‘You are my son, today I have begotten you.’ ”

The Way of Jesus

An alternative approach is to question Christians about the degree to which they actually follow Jesus Christ. Prophets brought divine laws or confirmed those brought by previous prophets, and invited people to worship God by obeying the divinely revealed laws. They also practically demonstrated for their followers how one should live by the law. Consequently, they also invited those who believed in them to follow their way as the

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[2] See also, Hosea 1:10, of the *King James Version.*

[3] In the *Revised Standard Version,* it states: “*And I will make him* ***the*** *first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth.*” See also Jeremiah 31:9, “*...for I am a father to Israel and Ephraim is my first-born.*”

[4] See also, Job 2:1 and 38:4-7. Other references to sons of God can also be found in Genesis 6:2, Deuteronomy 14:1 and Hosea 1:10.

[5] Luke 3:38.

[6] The term “begotten” in Old English meant ‘to be fathered by’ and it was used to distinguish between Jesus, who was supposed to be the literal son of God, from the figurative use of the term ‘son’ for God’s “created sons”.

correct way to come close to God. This principle is enshrined in the Gospel according to John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.” Although those who worship Jesus commonly quote this verse as part of the evidence for his divinity, Jesus did not invite people to worship himself instead of God, or as God. If these words were actually spoken by Jesus, what they mean is that one cannot worship God except in the way defined by the prophets of God. Jesus emphasized to his disciples that they could only worship God by the way which he had taught them. In the Qur’aan, Chapter Aal ‘Imraan, 3: 31, God instructs Prophet Muhammad ( ) to instruct mankind to follow him if they truly love God:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللهُ وَيَغْفِرْلَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

> “Tell [the people]: If you really love Allaah, then follow me and Allaah will love you and forgive your sins, for Allaah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

The way of the prophets is the only way to God, because it was prescribed by God Himself and the purpose of the prophets was to convey Allaah’s instructions to mankind. Without prophets, people would not know how to worship Allaah. Consequently, all prophets informed their followers of how to worship God. Conversely, adding anything to the religion brought by the prophets is incorrect.

Any changes made to the religion after the time of the prophets represents deviation inspired by Satan. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad ( ) was reported to have said, “Whoever adds anything new to the religion of Islam, will have it rejected [by God].”[7] Furthermore, anyone who worshipped Allaah contrary to Jesus’ instructions, would have worshipped in vain.

First and foremost, it must be realized that Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, was the last in the line of Jewish prophets. He lived according to the Torah, the law of Moses, and taught his followers to do likewise. In Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus stated: “17 Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the [way of] the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18For, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.” Unfortunately, about five years after the end of Jesus’ ministry, a young rabbi by the name of Saul of Tarsus, who claimed to have seen Jesus in a vision, began to change Jesus’ way. Paul (his Roman name) had considerable respect for Roman philosophy and he spoke proudly of his own Roman citizenship. His conviction was that non-Jews who became Christians should not be burdened with the Torah in any respect. The author of Acts 13:39 quotes Paul as saying, “And by him every one that believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.” It was primarily through the efforts of Paul that

[7] *Sahih Al-Bukhari,* vol. 3, p. 535, no. 861, and *Sahih Muslim,* vol. 3, p. 931, no. 4266.

the Church began to take on its non-Jewish character. Paul[8] wrote most of the New Testament letters (epistles), which the Church accepts as the official doctrine and inspired Scripture. These letters do not preserve the Gospel of Jesus or even represent it;[9] instead, Paul transformed the teachings of Christ into a Hellenic (Greco-Roman) philosophy.

The following are some examples of teachings which Prophet Jesus followed and taught, but which were later abandoned by the Church. However, most of these teachings were revived in the final message of Islaam brought by Prophet Muhammad ( ) and remain a fundamental part of Muslim religious practices until today.

Circumcision

Jesus was circumcised. According to the Old Testament, this tradition began with Prophet Abraham, who was himself neither a Jew nor a Christian. In Genesis 17:10, it is written, "**9** And God said to Abraham, 'As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. **10**This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. **11**You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. **12**He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised; every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house, or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, **13**both he that is born in your house and he that is bought with your money, shall be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant."

In the Gospel according to Luke 2:21: "And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb." Consequently, to be circumcised was a part of Jesus' way. However, today most Christians are not circumcised, because of a rationale introduced by Paul. He claimed that circumcision was the circumcision of the heart. In his letter to the Romans 2:29, he wrote: "He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal." In his letter to the Galatians 5:2, he wrote: "Now I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you."[10] This was Paul's false interpretation. On the other hand, Jesus was not circumcised by the heart nor did he say anything about circumcision of the heart; he kept the "everlasting covenant" and was circumcised in the flesh. Thus, an important part of following the way of Jesus is circumcision.

Pork

Jesus did not eat pork. He followed the laws of Moses and he did not eat pork. In Leviticus 11:7-8, "7 And the swine, because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed but

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[8] He was beheaded in Rome 34 years after the end of Jesus' ministry.

[9] *Biblical Studies From a Muslim Perspective*, p. 18.

[10] See also Galatians 6:15.

does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. 8Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch; they are unclean to you."11 Jesus' only dealing with pigs was his permission to the unclean spirits which were possessing a man to enter them. When they entered the herd of pigs, they ran into the water and drowned. However, most people who call themselves Christians today not only eat pork, they love it so much that they have made pigs the subject of nursery rhymes [e.g. This little piggy went to market ...] and children's stories [eg. The Three Little Pigs]. Porky Pig is a very popular cartoon character and recently a full-length feature movie was made about a pig called "Babe". Thus, it may be said that those who call themselves followers of Christ are not in fact following the way of Christ.

In Islamic law, the prohibition of pork and its products has been strictly maintained from the time of Prophet Muhammad ( ) until today. Jesus and his early followers observed the proper method of slaughter by mentioning God's name and cutting the jugular veins of the animals while they were living to allow the heart to pump out the blood. However, Christians today do not attach much importance to proper slaughter methods, as prescribed by God.

Alcohol

Jesus consecrated himself to God and therefore abstained from alcoholic drinks according to the instructions recorded in Numbers 6:1-4: "And the Lord said to Moses, 2'Say to the people of Israel, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of the Nazirite,12 to separate himself to the Lord, 3he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink, and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes, fresh or dried. 4All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins."

As to the 'miracle of turning water into wine',13 it is found only in the Gospel of John, which consistently contradicts the other three gospels. As mentioned earlier, the Gospel of John was opposed as heretical in the early Church,14 while the other three Gospels were referred to as the Synoptic Gospels because the texts contained a similar treatment of Jesus' life.15 Consequently, New Testament scholars have expressed doubt about the authenticity of this incident.

Ablution before Prayer

Prior to making formal prayer, Jesus used to wash his limbs according to the teachings of the Torah. Moses and Aaron are recorded as doing the same in Exodus 40:30-1, "**30** And

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[11] See also, Deuteronomy 14:8.
[12] That is *one separated* or *one consecrated.*
[13] John 2:1-11.
[14] *The Five Gospels,* p. 20.
[15] *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* vol. 5, p. 379.

he set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, **31**with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet.... as the Lord commanded Moses."

Prostration in Prayer

Jesus is described in the Gospels as prostrating during prayer. In Matthew 26:39, the author describes an incident which took place when Jesus went with his disciples to Gethsemane: "And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Christians today kneel down, clasping their hands, in a posture which cannot be ascribed to Jesus. The method of prostration in prayer followed by Jesus was not of his own making. It was the mode of prayer of the prophets before him. In the Old Testament, Genesis 17:3, Prophet Abraham is recorded to have fallen on his face in prayer; in Numbers 16:22 & 20:6, both Moses and Aaron are recorded to have fallen on their faces in worship; in Joshua 5:14 & 7:6, Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped; in I Kings 18:42, Elijah bowed down on the ground and put his face between his knees. This was the way of the prophets through whom God chose to convey His word to the world; and it is only by this way that those who claim to follow Jesus will gain the salvation which he preached in his Gospel.

Veiling

The women around Jesus veiled themselves according to the practice of the women around the earlier prophets. Their garments were loose and covered their bodies completely, and they wore scarves which covered their hair. In Genesis 24:64-5 : "And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she alighted from the camel, 65and said to the servant, 'Who is the man yonder, walking in the field to meet us?' The servant said, 'It is my master.' So she took her veil and covered herself." Paul wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians, "5 But any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonours her head—it is the same as if her head were shaven. 6For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her wear a veil." Some may argue that it was the general custom of those times to be completely veiled. However, that is not the case. In both Rome and Greece, whose cultures dominated the region, the popular dress was quite short and revealed the arms, legs and chest. Only religious women in Palestine, following Jewish tradition, covered themselves modestly.

According to Rabbi Dr. Menachem M. Brayer (Professor of Biblical Literature at Yeshiva University), it was customary that Jewish women went out in public with a head-covering which, sometimes, even covered the whole face, leaving only one eye free.16

[16] *The Jewish Woman in Rabbinic Literature,* p. 239.

He further stated that “during the Tannaitic period, the Jewish woman’s failure to cover her head was considered an affront to her modesty. When her head was uncovered she might be fined four hundred zuzim for this offence.”17

The famous early Christian theologian, St. Tertullian (d. 220 CE), in his famous treatise, ‘On The Veiling of Virgins’ wrote, “Young women, you wear your veils out on the streets, so you should wear them in the church; you wear them when you are among strangers, then wear them among your brothers...” Among the Canon laws of the Catholic church until today, there is a law that requires women to cover their heads in church.18 Christian denominations, such as the Amish and the Menonites for example, keep their women veiled to the present day.

In Chapter al-Ahzaab (33): 59, the reason for veiling is given. Allaah states that it makes the believing women known in the society and provides protection for them from possible social harm.

Greetings

Jesus greeted his followers by saying “Peace be upon you”. In chapter 20:19, the anonymous author of the Gospel according to John wrote the following about Jesus after his supposed crucifixion: “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.’ ” This greeting was according to that of the prophets, as mentioned in the books of the Old Testament. For example, in 1st Samuel 25:6, Prophet David instructed emissaries whom he sent to Nabal: “And thus you shall salute him: ‘Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have.’ ” The Qur’aan instructs all who enter homes to give greetings of peace;19 and those entering paradise will be greeted similarly by the angels.20 Whenever Muslims meet each other, they use this greeting.

Fasting

According to the Gospels, Jesus fasted for forty days. Matthew 4:2: “And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was hungry.”21 This was in accordance with the practice of the earlier prophets. Moses is also recorded in Exodus 34:28, to have fasted: “And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.”

The purpose of fasting is clearly defined in Qur’aan (2: 183) as being for the development of God-consciousness. Only God knows who is actually fasting and who is

[17] Ibid., p. 139.
[18] Clara M. Henning, “Canon Law and the Battle of the Sexes,” in *Religion and Sexism,* p. 272.
[19] Chapter an-Noor, (24):27.
[20] Chapter al-A‘raaf, (7):46.
[21] See also Matthew 6:16 and 17:21.

not. Consequently, one who is fasting refrains from eating and drinking based on an awareness of God. Regular fasting heightens that awareness, which subsequently leads to a greater inclination towards righteousness.

The believers are required to fast from dawn until dusk for the whole month of Ramadaan (the ninth month of the lunar calendar). Prophet Muhammad ( ) also said, "The best fast [outside of Ramadaan] is that of my brother [Prophet] David who used to fast every other day."22

Interest

By upholding the Law, Prophet Jesus also opposed the giving or taking of interest because the texts of the Torah expressly forbade interest. It is recorded in Deuteronomy 23:19 that, "You shall not lend upon interest to your brother, interest on money, interest upon victuals,23 interest on anything that is lent for interest."24 Interest is also strictly forbidden in Chapter al-Baqarah (2):278 of the Qur'aan:

> "O you who believe, fear Allaah and give up what interest remains due to you, if you really are believers."

In order to fulfill this divine requirement, Muslims developed an alternative system of banking, commonly known as 'Islamic Banking', which is interest-free.

Polygamy

There is no record of Prophet Jesus opposing polygamy. If he did so, it would have meant that the condemned the practice of the prophets before him. There are a number of examples of polygamous marriages among the prophets recorded in the Torah. Prophet Abraham had two wives, according to Genesis 16:13: "So after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to Abram her husband <u>as a wife</u>." So did Prophet David, according to the first book of Samuel 27:3, "And David dwelt with Achish at Gat, he and his men, every man with his household, and David with his two wives, Ahin'oam of Jezreel, and Abigail of Carmel, Nabal's widow." In 1st Kings 11:3, Solomon is said to have "...had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines." Solomon's son, Rehobo'am, also had a number of wives, according to 2nd Chronicles 11:21, "Rehobo'am loved Ma'acah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and concubines (he took eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and had twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters)." In fact, the Torah even specified laws regarding the division of inheritance in polygamous circumstances. In Deuteronomy 21:15-16, the law states: "15 If a man has two wives, the

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[22] *Sahih Al-Bukhari,* vol.3, pp.113-4, no.200 and *Sahih Muslim,* vol.2, p.565, no.2595.

[23] Food or provisions.

[24] However, in the verse following this one, the Jews made lending on interest to non-Jews permissible: "*To a foreigner you may lend upon interest, but to your brother you shall not lend upon interest.*" (Deuteronomy 23:20)

one loved and the other disliked, and they have borne him children, both the loved and the disliked, and if the first-born son is hers that is disliked, 16then on the day when he assigns his possessions as an inheritance to his sons, he may not treat the son of the loved as the first-born in preference to the son of the disliked, who is the first-born." The only restriction on polygamy was the ban on taking a wife's sister as a rival wife in Leviticus 18:18, "And you shall not take a woman as a rival wife to her sister, uncovering her nakedness while her sister is yet alive." The Talmud advises a maximum of four wives as was the practice of Prophet Jacob.25

According to Father Eugene Hillman, "Nowhere in the New Testament is there any explicit commandment that marriage should be monogamous or any explicit commandment forbidding polygamy."26 He further stressed the fact that the Church in Rome banned polygamy in order to conform to Greco-Roman culture which prescribed only one legal wife while tolerating concubinage and prostitution.27

Islaam limited polygamy to a maximum of four wives at one time and stipulated the maintenance of justice as a basic condition for polygamy Qur'aan (4:3), God states:

> "Marry of the women that please you two, three or four. But if you fear that you will not be able to deal justly, then [marry only] one ..."

Christian Scriptures

Authorship

According to Biblical scholars, even the authorship of the Old Testament books and the Gospels themselves is in doubt.

Torah

The first five books of the Bible (the Pentateuch)28 are traditionally attributed to Prophet Moses,29 however, there are many verses within these books which indicate that Prophet Moses could not possibly have written everything in them. For example, Deuteronomy 34.5-8 states: "5 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord, 6 and he buried him in the valley of the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows the place of his burial to this day. 7 Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. 8 And the people of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty

[25] *Women in Judaism,* p. 148.
[26] *Polygamy Reconsidered,* p. 140.
[27] Ibid., p. 17.
[28] Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
[29] Orthodox Jews claim that the Torah, the Jewish name for the first five books, was created 974 generations before the creation of the world. According to them, God dictated the Torah during the 40 days Moses was on Mount Sinai, in such a final and irrevocable form that it is sinful to claim that Moses wrote even one letter of it by himself.

days; then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses ended." It is quite obvious that someone else wrote these verses about Prophet Moses' death.

In the appendix of the Revised Standard Version entitled "Books of the Bible," the following is written concerning the authorship of over one third of the remaining books of the Old Testament:

Books	Authors
Judges	Possibly Samuel
Ruth	Perhaps Samuel
First Samuel	Unknown
Second Samuel	Unknown
First Kings	Unknown
Second Kings	Unknown
First Chronicles	Unknown
Esther	Unknown
Job	Unknown
Ecclesiastes	Doubtful
Jonah	Unknown
Malachi	Nothing known

Apocrypha

More than half of the world's Christians are Roman Catholics. Their version of the Bible was published in 1582 from Jerome's Latin Vulgate, and reproduced at Douay in 1609. The Old Testament of the RCV (Roman Catholic Version) contains seven more books than the King James Version recognized by the Protestant world. The extra books are referred to as the apocrypha (i.e., of doubtful authority) and were removed from the Bible in 1611 by Protestant Bible scholars.

The Gospels

Aramaic was the spoken language of the Jews of Palestine. Consequently, it is believed that Jesus and his disciples spoke and taught in Aramaic.30 "The earliest oral tradition of Jesus' deeds and sayings undoubtedly circulated in Aramaic. However, the four Gospels were written in an entirely different speech, common Greek, the spoken

[30] Aramaic is a Semitic language which gradually supplanted Akkadian as the common tongue of the Near East in the 7th and 6th centuries BC. It later became the official language of the Persian Empire. Aramaic replaced Hebrew as the language of the Jews; portions of the Old Testament books of Daniel and Ezra are written in Aramaic, as are the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds. Its period of greatest influence extended from 300 BC until 650 CE, after which it was gradually supplanted by Arabic. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* vol. 1, p. 516)

language of the civilized Mediterranean world, to serve the majority of the Church, which was becoming Hellenistic (Greek-speaking) instead of Palestinian. Traces of Aramaic survive in the Greek Gospels. For example, in Mark 5:41, "Taking her by the hand he said to her, 'Tal'itha cu'mi'; which means 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' " and Mark 15:34, "And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'E'lo-i, E'lo-i, la'ma sabachtha'ni?' which means, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' "31

The New Testament Gospel of Mark, though considered by Church scholars to be the oldest of the Gospels, was not written by a disciple of Jesus. Biblical scholars concluded, based on the evidence contained in the Gospel, that Mark himself was not a disciple of Jesus. Furthermore, according to them, it is not even certain who Mark really was. The ancient Christian author, Eusebius (325 C.E.), reported that another ancient author, Papias (130 C.E.), was the first to attribute the Gospel to John Mark, a companion of Paul.32 Others suggested that he may have been the scribe of Peter and yet others hold that he was probably someone else.

The same is the case with the other Gospels. Although Matthew, Luke and John are the names of disciples of Jesus, the authors of the Gospels bearing their names were not those famous disciples, but other individuals who used the disciples' names to give their accounts credibility. In fact, all the Gospels originally circulated anonymously. Authoritative names were later assigned to them by unknown figures in the early church.33

Books	Authors
Gospel of Matthew	Unknown34
Gospel of Mark	Unknown35
Gospel of Luke	Unknown36
Gospel of John	Unknown37
Acts	The author of Luke38

[31] *Encyclopedia Americana*, vol. 3, p. 654.
[32] *The Five Gospels,* p. 20, and *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* vol. 14, p. 824. For references to various Marks in the New Testament, see the following: Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5; 15:36-41; Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24; and I Peter 5:13.
[33] *The Five Gospels,* p. 20.
[34] "Although there is a Matthew named among the various lists of Jesus' disciples...the writer of Matthew is probably anonymous."*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* vol. 14, p. 826.
[35] "Though the author of Mark is probably unknown..."*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* vol. 14, p. 824.
[36] "The Muratorian Canon refers to Luke, the physician, Paul's companion; Irenaeus depicts Luke as a follower of Paul's gospel. Eusebius has Luke as an Antiochene physician who was with Paul in order to give the Gospel apostolic authority." *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* vol. 14, p. 827.
[37] "From internal evidence the Gospel was written by a beloved disciple whose name is unknown." *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* vol. 14, p. 828.
[38] *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 14, p. 830.

I, II, III John	The author of John[39]

J.B. Phillips, a prebendary[40] of the Chichester Cathedral, the Anglican Church of England, wrote the following preface for his translation of the Gospel according to St. Matthew: "Early tradition ascribed this Gospel to the apostle Matthew, but scholars nowadays almost all reject this view. The author, whom we can conveniently call Matthew, has plainly drawn on the mysterious "Q",[41] which may have been a collection of oral traditions. He has used Mark's Gospel freely, though he has rearranged the order of events and has in several instances used different words for what is plainly the same story."[42] The Fourth Gospel (John) was opposed as heretical in the early church, and it knows none of the stories associated with John, son of Zebedee.[43] In the judgement of many scholars, it was produced by a "school" of disciples, probably in Syria in the last decade of the first century.[44]

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[39] Ibid., vol. 14, p. 844.

[40] A priest who receives income from the revenue of a church, especially a cathedral. (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, p. 973.)

[41] There are about two hundred identical verses found in both Matthew and Luke (e.g. Matt 3:7-10 & Luke 3:7-9; Matt. 18:10-14 & Luke 15:3-7), with no equivalent in either Mark or John. As a way of explaining this striking agreement, a German scholar hypothesized that there once existed a source document, which he referred to as a *Quelle* (German for "source"). The abbreviation "Q" was later adopted as its name.

The existence of *Q* was once challenged by some scholars on the grounds that a sayings gospel was not really a gospel. The challengers argued that there were no ancient parallels to a gospel containing only sayings and parables and lacking stories about Jesus, especially the story about his trial and death. The discovery of the Gospel of Thomas changed all that. (*The Five Gospels,* p. 12.) Thomas contains one hundred and fourteen sayings and parables ascribed to Jesus; it has no narrative framework: no account of Jesus' exorcisms, healings, trial, death, and resurrection; no birth or childhood stories; and no narrated account of his public ministry in Galilee and Judea. The Coptic translation of this document (written about 350 C.E.), found in 1945 at Nag Hammadi in Egypt, has enabled scholars to identify three Greek fragments (dated around 200 C.E.), discovered earlier, as pieces of three different copies of the same gospel. Thomas has forty-seven parallels to Mark, forty parallels to *Q*, seventeen to Matthew, four to Luke, and five to John. About sixty-five sayings or parts of sayings are unique to Thomas. (*The Five Gospels,* p.15).

[42] *The Gospels in Modern English.*

[43] Since the late 18th century, the first three Gospels have been called the Synoptic Gospels, because the texts, set side by side, show a similar treatment of the life and death of Jesus Christ. (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* vol. 5, p. 379).

[44] *The Five Gospels,* p. 20.

DA‘WAH

TO

HINDUS

DAWAH TO HINDUS

Hinduism is a religion that originated in India and is still practiced there, as well as in those countries within the Indian cultural sphere (chiefly South East Asia) and those with resident communities of Indian stock (chiefly South East Asia, East Africa, South Africa, and Britain). The word Hindu is derived from the Sanskrit word *sindhu* ("river", more specifically, the Indus); the Persians in the 5th century BC called the Hindus by that name, identifying them as the people of the land of the Indus. The Hindus' own definitions of their community are *Sanatana Dharam* "old tradition" or *Vedantic Dharam* "those who believe in the Vedas" or "those who follow the way (dharma) of the four classes or castes (*varnas*) and stages of life (*ashramas*)".

Fundamental Principles

Among Hindus, there is far more uniformity in ritual than in belief is found, although all share very few practices or beliefs. Many Hindus worship Shiva, Vishnu, or the Goddess (Devi), but they also worship hundreds of additional minor deities peculiar to a particular village or even to a particular family.

No doctrinal or ecclesiastical hierarchy exists in Hinduism, but the intricate hierarchy of the social system (which is inseparable from the religion gives each person a sense of place within the whole.

The Scriptures

There are several sacred scriptures of the Hindus. Among these are the four Vedas (Rig, Sam, Yajar, Atharva) and ten principal Upanishads and eighteen Puranas and two epics called Ramayana and Mahabarata. And the most widely read book among Hindus is Bhagavad – Gita. Bhagavad – Gita is a part of the Mahabarata.

Philosophy

Incorporated in this rich literature is a complex cosmology. Hindus believe that the universe is a great, sphere; a cosmic egg, within which are numerous concentric heavens, hells, oceans, and continents, with India at the center. They believe that time is both degenerative going from the golden age, or Krita Yuga, through two intermediate periods of decreasing goodness, to the present age, or Kali Yuga – and cyclic. At the end of each kali Yuga, the Universe is destroyed by fire and flood, and a new golden age begins, Human life, too, is cyclic, involving transmigration. After death, the soul leaves the body and is reborn in the body of another person, an animal, vegetables, or minerals. This process of endless entanglement in activity and rebirth is called Samsara.

Doctrine of atman-brahman.

Hindus believe in an uncreated, eternal, infinite, transcendent, and all-embracing principle, which, "comprising in itself being and non-being," is the sole reality, the ultimate cause and foundation, source, and goal of all existence. This ultimate

reality is called Brahman. As the all, Brahman causes the universe and all beings to emanate from itself, transforms itself into the universe, or assumes its appearance. Brahman is in all things and is the Self (atman) of all living beings. Brahman is the creator, preserver, or transformer and reabsorber of everything. Although it is Being in itself, without attributes and qualities and hence impersonal, it may also be conceived of as a personal high God, usually as Vishnu or Shiva.

Ahimsa: non-injury

A further characteristic of Hinduism is the ideal of ahimsa. Ahimsa, or the absence of the desire to harm, is regarded by Indian thinkers as one of the keystones of their ethics. Historically, ahimsa is unrelated to vegetarianism; in ancient India, killing people in war or in capital punishment and killing animals in Vedic sacrifices were acceptable to many people who for other reasons refrained from eating meat. However, the tow movements, reinforced one another through the common concept of the disinclination to kill and eat animals, and together they contributed to the growing importance of the protection and veneration of the cow, which gives food without having to be killed. Neither ahimsa nor vegetarianism ever found full acceptance. Even today, many Hindus eat beef, and nonviolence has never been a notable characteristic of Hindu behaviour.

Three Margas: Paths To Salvation

Hindus disagree about the way (marga) to final emancipation (moksha). Three paths to salvation are presented in an extremely influential religious text, the Bhagavadgeetaa (Song of the Lord; c. 200 BC), according to which it is not the acts themselves but the desire for their results that produces karma and thus attachment. These three ways to salvation are (1) the karma-marga ("the path of duties"), the disinterested discharge of ritual and social obligations; (2) the jnana-marga ("the path of knowledge"), the use of meditative concentration preceded by a long and systematic ethical and contemplative training, yoga, to gain a supra-intellectual insight into one's identity with Brahman; and (3) the bhakti-marga ("the path of devotion"), the devotion to a personal God.

Although the search for moksha has never been the goal of more than a small minority of Hindus, liberation was a religious ideal that affected all lives…

For the ordinary Hindu, the main aim of worldly life lies in conforming to social and ritual duties, to the traditional rules of conduct for one's caste, family, and profession. Such requirements constitute an individual's dharma (law and duties), one's own part of the broader stability, law, order and fundamental equilibrium in the cosmos, nature, and society. Sanaatana (traditional) dharma – a term used by Hindus to denote their own religion – is a close approximation to "religious practices" in the West. (p. 521)1

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[1] According to Hindu monist philosophers, humankind's purpose is the realization of their divinity and - following a path (*marga*) to emancipation (*moksha*) from the wheel of rebirth - the reabsorbtion of the human soul (*atman*) into the ultimate reality, *Brahman*. For those following the *bhakti* path, the purpose is to love God because God created humankind to "enjoy a relationship - as a father enjoys his

Ashramas: the four stages of life

Nearly 2,000 years ago, the *Upanishads* elaborated the social doctrine of the four *ashramas* (stages of life). This concept is an attempt at harmonizing the conflicting tendencies of Hinduism into one system. It held that a member of the three higher classes should first become a chaste student (*brahmachari*); then become a married householder (*grihastha*), discharging his debts to his ancestors by begetting sons and to the gods by sacrificing; then retire as a *vanaprastha*, without his wife, to the forest to devote himself to spiritual contemplation; finally, become a homeless wandering ascetic (*sannyasin*). The situation of the forest dweller was always a delicate compromise that remained problematic. And was often omitted or rejected in practical life.

Caste System

The religious sanction and framework given to the caste system in India have made it a particularly powerful social tool – a rebellion against caste becomes a rebellion against religion, with consequences in this and future lives – and has been a factor in its remarkable endurance to this day. The caste system appears to have evolved some time after the arrival into northern India of the Indo-European tribes known as the Aryans, a nomadic people, around 1500 BC, after the collapse of the Indus Valley civilization.

The Hindu scriptures teach that there are many gods, incarnations of gods, persons of God and that everything is God, Brahman. In spite of the belief that the self (atman) of all living beings is actually Brahman, an oppressive caste system evolved in which the Brahmins, the priestly caste, possess spiritual supremacy by birth. They are the teachers of the Vedas2 and represent the ideal of ritual purity and social prestige. On the other hand, the Sudra caste are excluded from religious status and their sole duty in life is "to serve meekly"3 the other three castes and their thousands of subcastes.

Varnas

The Aryans divided human society into four groups (varna, the Sanskrit word for color). The four varnas, in descending order of status, are the Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (the kings and warriors).the Vaishyas (the farmers and merchants), and the Shudras (servants).

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children"(*Srimad Bhagwatam*). For the ordinary Hindu, the main aim of worldly life lies in conforming to social and ritual duties, to the traditional rules of conduct for one's caste - the *karma* path.

[2] The *Veda*, meaning "Knowledge", is a collective term for revealed (*sruti;* heard) sacred scriptures of the Hindus. All other works - in which the actual doctrines and practises of Hindus are encoded - are recognized as having being composed by human authors and are thus classed as *smriti* (remembered). (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol.20, p.530).

[3] *Manava Dharmasastra* 1.91 (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol.20, p.553).

Those who performed the most menial tasks, such as the sweepers, and those who collected waste, were left out of the caste system altogether, becoming outcastes or *Chandalas*.

GODS AND GOD-MEN

Trimurti

(Sanskrit: “Three Forms”), in Hinduism, a triad of the three great gods, *Brahmā, Vishnu*, and *Śiva* (*Shiva*). Scholars consider the *Trimurtī* doctrine as an attempt to reconcile different monotheistic approaches with one another and with the philosophic doctrine of ultimate reality (*Brahman*). Although sometimes called the Hindu Trinity, Trimurtī has little similarity to the Christian Trinity. The doctrine was given classical expression in Kālidāsa's poem Kumārasambhava (c. 4th–5th century).

Rama

One of the most widely worshipped Hindu deities, the embodiment of chivalry and virtue. Although there are three *Rāmas* mentioned in Indian tradition (*Paraśurāma, Balarāma*, and *Rāmacandra*), the name is specifically associated with *Rāmacandra*, the seventh incarnation (*avatāra*) of Lord Vishnu. It is possible that Rāma was an actual historical figure, a tribal hero of ancient India who was later deified. His story is told briefly in the *Mahābhārata* (“Great Epic of the Bharata Dynasty”) and at great length in the *Rāmāyana* (q.v.; “Romance of Rāma”).

References to Rāma as an incarnation of Vishnu appear in the early centuries AD; there was, however, probably no special worship of him before the 11th century, and it was not until the 14th and 15th centuries that distinct sects appeared venerating him as the supreme god. Rāma's popularity was increased greatly by the retelling of the Sanskrit epics in the vernaculars, such as *Tulsīdās*' celebrated Hindi version, the *Rāmcaritmānas* (“Sacred Lake of the Acts of Rāma”).

Hanuman

In Hindu mythology, the divine monkey chief, a central figure in the great Hindu epic the *Rāmāyana* (“Romance of Rāma”). Hanumān is the child of a nymph by the wind god; accompanied by a host of monkeys, he aided Rāma in recovering his wife, Sītā, from the demon Rāvana. His heroic exploits are many. He acted as Rāma's spy in the midst of the demon's kingdom; when he was discovered and his tail set on fire; he burnt down their city, Lankā. Hanumān flew to the Himalayas and carried back the mountain of medicinal herbs to restore the wounded among Rāma's army. He crossed the strait between India and Sri Lanka in one leap.

A beneficent guardian spirit, he is worshiped in the form of a monkey with a red face, who stands erect like a human. Temples in his honor are numerous. In his devotion to Rāma, Hanumān is upheld as a model for human devotion to

god, an attitude depicted by South Indian bronze sculptors. He is also a popular deity in Japan, where many temples are erected to his honor and districts of towns bear his name. The hanuman monkey (*Presbytis entellus*), one of the most common Indian monkeys, is named after the god and is thus generally looked upon as sacred.

Ganesha

Also spelled Ganesh, also called *Ganapati* is the elephant-headed Hindu god, who is the son of Lord Shiva and his wife, *Parvati*. He is also revered by Jains and important in the art, myth, and ritual of Buddhist Asia.

One account of his birth is that Parvati formed him from the rubbings of her body so that he might stand guard at the door while she bathed. When Shiva approached (unaware that this was Parvati's son), he was enraged at being kept away from his wife and set his attendants against Ganesha, whose head was cut off in the battle. To ease Parvati's grief, Shiva promised to cut off the head of the first creature that he came across and join it to the body. This was a baby elephant.

Krishna

Sanskrit *Krsna* one of the most widely revered and most popular of all Indian divinities, worshipped as the eighth incarnation (*avatar*, or *avatāra*) of the Hindu god Vishnu and also as a supreme god in his own right. Krishna became the focus of numerous *bhakti* (devotional) cults, which over the centuries have produced a wealth of religious poetry, music,and painting. The basic sources of Krishna's mythology are the epic *Mahābhārata* and its 5th-century-AD appendix, the *Harivanśa*, and the *Purānas*, particularly Books 10 and 11 of the *Bhāgavata-Purāna* .

Avatara

Sanskrit *Avatāra* ("descent"), in Hinduism is the incarnation of a deity in human or animal form to counteract some particular evil in the world. The term usually refers to these 10 appearances of Vishnu: *Matsya* (fish), *Kūrma* (tortoise), *Varāha* (boar), *Narasimha* (half man, half lion), *Vāmana* (dwarf), *Paraśurāma* (Rāma with the axe), *Rāma* (hero of the Rāmāyana epic), *Krishna* (the divine cowherd), *Buddha*, and *Kalkin* (the incarnation yet to come). The number of Vishnu's *avatars* is sometimes extended or their identities changed, according to local preferences. Thus, Krishna is in some areas elevated to the rank of a deity, and his half brother, *Balarāma*, included as an *avatar*. One formulation of the doctrine is given in the religious poem the *Bhagavadgītā*, when charioteer Lord Krishna tells Arjuna: "Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness then I send forth myself for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of righteousness. I come into being from age to age."

New Gods Every Day

"The adaptability of Hinduism to changing conditions is illustrated by the appearance in the Hindu pantheon of a new divinity, of special utility in an acquisitive society. This is the goddess Santosee Maataa, first worshipped widely by women in many cities of Uttar Pradesh and now worshipped throughout India, largely as the result of a popular mythological film about her birth and the origin of her worship. The new goddess was unheard-of a few years ago and has no basis in any Puraanic myth. Propitiated by comparatively simple and inexpensive rites performed in the home without the intervention of a priest, Santosee, it is believe, grants practical and obvious blessings, such as a promotion for a needy, overworked husband, a new radio, or even a refrigerator." (p. 529)

Worship and Ritual (Puja)

In daily ritual, a Hindu (generally the wife, who is thought to have more power to intercede with the gods) makes offerings (*puja*) of fruit or flowers before a small shrine in the house. Many villages, and all sizeable towns, have temples, where priests perform ceremonies throughout the day: sunrise prayers and noises to awaken the god within the holy of holies (the *garbagriha*, or "womb-house"); bathing, clothing, and fanning the god; feeding the god and distributing the remains of the food (*prasada*) to worshipers.

Virtually all rituals in Hinduism possess multiple meanings, including symbolic interpretations. Even the way Hindus regularly greet each other may be regarded as hands together, which symbolizes the meeting of two people; placing the hands over the heart where *Brahman* dwells, indicating that one meets the self in the other; bowing the head in recognition of this meeting; and saying *nameste*, a Sanskrit word that means "I bow to you" and signifies "I bow to the divine in you."

Puja. Hindu worship (puja) consists essentially of an invocation, a reception, and the entertainment of God as a royal guest. It normally consists of 16 "attendances" (upacaara): invocation by which the omnipresent God is invited to direct his attention to the particular worship; the offering of a seat, water (for washing the feet, for washing the hands, and for rinsing the mouth), a bath, a garment, a sacred thread, perfumes, flowers, incense, a lamp, food and homage; and a circumambulation of the image and dismissal by God." (p. 550)

"In the temple the god was worshipped by the rites of puja (reverencing a sacred being or object) as though the worshippers were serving a great king. In the important temples a large staff of trained officiants waited on the god., He was awakened in the morning along with his goddess, washed, clothed and fed, placed in his shrine to give audience to his subjects, praised and entertained throughout the day, ceremoniously fed, undressed, and put to bed at night. Worshipers sang, burned lamps, waved lights before the divine image, and performed other acts of homage. The god's dancing girls (devadasis) performed before him at regular intervals, watched by the officiants and lay worshipers, who were his courtiers. These women, either the daughters of devadasis or girls dedicated in childhood, also served as prostitutes. The association of dedicated

prostitutes with certain Hindu shrines can be traced back to before the Christian era. It became more widespread in the post-Gupta times, especially in South India, and aroused the reprobation of 19th –century Europeans. Through the efforts of Hindu reformers the office of the devadasis was discontinued." (p. 525)

Bindi, the red dot that many Hindu women wear on the forehead, is an auspicious mark and symbol of good fortune. Once worn only by married women, *bindi* can be seen today on girls and women of all ages. Its location, over a *chakra* (energy point), is intended to help focus concentration during meditation.

Lingam (Sanskrit: "sign," "distinguishing symbol"), in Hinduism, the phallus, symbol of the god Siva, worshipped as an emblem of generative power. The *linga* is the main object of worship in Saivite temples and private family shrines throughout India. Anthropomorphic representations of Siva are less commonly worshipped. The Yoni, which is the symbol of the female sexual organ (and thus of the goddess Parvati consort of Siva), often forms the base of the erect linga; the two together are a reminder to the devotee that the male and female principles are forever inseparable and that together they represent the totality of all existence.

Suttee (Sanskrit *sati*, "true wife"), is a practice that prevailed in India of a widow burning herself on the funeral pyre, either with the body of her husband or, if had died at a distance, separately. Classical authors mention it as early as 316 BC. It appears at first to have been a royal custom and privilege, afterward generalized and made legal. The British abolished the custom in 1829, but isolated instances persisted in remote parts of India until recent times. In theory the act of *suttee* was voluntary, but in earlier orthodox communities any woman who refused to perform it was ostracized.

Prophet Muhammad (°) in Hindu scriptures

Etha sminnanthare mletcha acharyena samanwitha
Mahamada ithikhyadha shishya shakha samanwitham
(Bhavishya Purana 3:3:3:5)

"Then a preacher by name Mahammad along with his followers will appear in foreign Island."

Ne me viduh sura-ganah prabhavam na maharsayah
Ahamad-ir hi devanam maharsinam ca sarvasah
(Bhagavad-gita ch.10 ver.2)

"Neither the hosts of demigods nor the great sages know my origen, Ahamad is the name of a man who will demolish demigods and demi-sages."

GENERAL STEPS FOR DA'WAH TO HINDUS

The following are some of the major issues to discuss, clarifying the Islaamic position:

1. Is God Man and Man God (Atman-Brahman)? The Avatars or incarnations of God blurs the distinction between Creator and creation.

2. Changing Beliefs: Sati (wife dying on the funeral pyre of her husband); Devadasis (god's dancing girls who doubled as temple prostitutes – banned by Europeans in 19th century); vegetarianism not found in early scriptures; the four Ashramas (stages of life) impractical; caste system unjust – True religion from God not changeable as basic principles needed to guide human life unchangeable.

3. Inappropriate Scriptures: Ramayana – Rama, god, cavorting with women, playing tricks by hiding their clothing when he found them swimming. Rama's wife was captured by Rawan, a Demon god, and it took 12 years to get her back. He was helped by Hanuman, the monkey god of power, to building a bridge from India to Sri Lanka of which there is no trace. Ganesh, elephant head god of good luck, son on Shiva, god of destruction and Parvati, Lord Shiva chopped off his head not realizing that it was his son and lost the head, and replaced it with the head of an elephant.

4. Degrading Worship: Lingam Yoni – animals etc.

5. Unfair and Unjust Caste system: Brahmin born teachers of the Vedas, Shudras not allowed even to read the Vedas.

6. Muhammad mentioned in Hindu scriptures.

7. Authors of Hindu Scriptures Unknown.

HINDU TERMINOLOGY

WORD	PRONOUNCIATON	MEANING
Avtar		Incarnation
Ashramas		The four stages of life
Brahmins		Priestly Caste
Brahmachari		Chaste student
Bhagwat-Gita		Hindu Scriptures
Bindi		The red dot on the forehead
Chandalas		Out Caste
Chakra		Energy Point
Dharma		Religion or Duty
Devi		Goddess
Grihasth		Married, House Holder

Garbagriha		Womb-House
Kshatriya		The king and warriors caste
Lingam		Male Sexual Organ
Mahabharata		Hindu Scriptures
Namaste		I bow to you
Puja		Worship and Ritual
Prasada		Distributing
Purans		Hindu Scriptures
Ramayana		Hindu Scriptures
Sindhu		Indus River
Samsara		Process of rebirth
Sanskrit		Ancient Indian Language
Shudras		The Servants Caste
Sannyasin		Forest Dweller
Suttee or Sati		“True Wife”
Trimorti		The Trinity of Hindus
Upnishad		Hindu Scriptures
Varnas		Color, The four classes, caste system
Vanaprasth		Retirement
Vedas		Sacred book of Hindus
Yug		Age
Yoni		Female Sexual Organ

DIFFICULT

DA‘WAH

QUESTIONS

DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

THE PROPHET WAS A PEDOPHILE

The Prophet (°) has been accused of being a pedophile due his marriage to ‘Aa’ishah at the age of 9.

1. Pedophilia involves adults taking advantage of children by purchasing sexual favors from them. British and German sex tourists being caught in Sri Lanka, Thailand and the Philippines are not seeking marriage but only sex from child prostitutes or impoverished people willing to give their children away for a few pennies.

2. The age of consent for women set in the West varies from 14 to 18. These ages were arrived at by democratic vote and have no actual relationship to the woman’s ability or inability for sexual relations or marriage. Consequently, what is considered legal sex in France may be considered rape in England.

3. Islaam sets the age of marriage at puberty, as it is the natural dividing line between childhood and adulthood. Menstruation indicates that a young girl has reached childbearing age. This age may vary from country to country, but it is discernable and not arbitrary.

4. Most societies around the world sanctioned child marriages up until this century. It was not introduced by Islaam but regulated.

5. Islaam stipulates that a girl or boy married before puberty will not live with their spouse until they have attained puberty. Furthermore, they have the right to cancel or proceed with the marriage when they reach puberty.

6. ‘Aa’ishah was seven when she was married off to the Prophet (°) and she came to live with him when she reached puberty at nine.

7. Women abused as children usually have difficult times coping as adults. They are often unstable and psychologically handicapped. ‘Aa’ishah became the leading female scholar of her time and conveyed to the next generation an enormous body of Islaamic law. She was known to be the fourth most prolific narrator of the Prophetic traditions of all of the Prophet’s followers.

ISLAAM ALLOWS MUSLIM MALES TO BEAT THEIR WIVES

The finger is often pointed at Muslims as being wife beaters since Islaamic law permits hitting wives.

1. Domestic violence is not unique to Muslim societies, it is wide spread throughout the world. In fact the rate of violence is far higher in Western countries in which it is illegal for husbands to hit their wives. The reason being the extended family structure’s role in domestic disputes. In the West, the family is reduced to what is commonly referred to as the “nuclear family”; the husband, wife and kids.

Consequently, relatives have little or no concern in domestic disputes. In Muslim communities, the relatives are encouraged to interfere, to protect the rights of their daughter, sister, niece, aunt, or cousin. Families often live together, or in the same vicinity and family contact remains strong.

2. The West's attitude toward corporal punishment has changed drastically since Dr. Spock [not of the Enterprise] published his seminal work in the 50's on the rearing of children. His book became a standard, not only for parenting, but its principles became standards for educational institutions. His view was that children should be treated as little adults. They should be reasoned with, and advised, but not hit. In the same way that, as adults, one would not hit another adult in order to get them to follow instructions, nor would they be hit for disobeying orders, children should not be struck. As a result, the use of corporal punishment in schools was abandoned. It had already been stopped in prisons in favor of reform. The consequence in schools is that teachers became hostages in the hands of their students. A number of cases of students attacking teachers occurred in the late sixties and seventies. As a result, most inner city schools in America have metal detectors at their gates in order to disarm students.

3. Islaam recognizes corporal punishment for major crimes; 100 lashes for fornication, 80 for drunkenness and slander, etc. Furthermore, regarding children, the Prophet (°) said, "*Teach your children the prayer when they are seven and spank them for it at the age of ten.*"[1] There are limitations, in that the Prophet prohibited hitting in the face, even in the case of animals.

4. It is true that the *Sharee'ah* does permit a husband to hit his wife. Allaah stated that in the Qur'aan (*Soorah an-Nisaa*, (4): 34)[2]. The Prophet (°) also said, "*You have rights over your women that they do not allow anyone you dislike into your home. If they disobey you, you may spank them. And the woman's right on you is that you clothe her and feed her justly, according to your means.*"[3] However, that permission is under special conditions and with severe limitations. A husband is not permitted to beat his wife simply because she spilled his tea, burnt his toast, forgot to iron his shirt, etc. for example. The Qur'aanic permission given is specifically in the case of divorce, as a last resort to save the marriage. The Qur'aanic verse outlines the procedures which should be followed in the case of a rebellious and unjustly disobedient wife. She should first be verbally advised of her obligations. If that fails, the husband should then cease having sexual relations with her. Failing that, if the husband sees it useful, and as a final step in order to bring her back into line he is allowed to hit her. What is meant by the Prophet's words "*...If they disobey you...*" is rebellious disobedience to instructions permitted by Islaamic law. As to instructions which contradict the

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2 "Men are protectors and maintainers of women, because Allaah favored them over women and because they spend to support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient and guard what Allaah instructed them to guard in their husbands' absence. As for those rebellious women, admonish them, then abandon them in their beds, <u>then beat them</u>. But if they return to obedience, do not make their way difficult."

3 *Sahih Muslim,* vol. 2, pp. 615-6, no. 2803.

Sharee'ah, she is instructed to disobey. The Prophet (°) said, "*Creatures should not be obeyed if it means disobedience to the Creator*." As regards the hit, it should not be physically damaging and it should not be in the face as the Prophet (°) said, "... *Do not hit her in her face nor curse her...*"[4] and "*Do not beat your wives as you would your servant girls in pre-Islamic times.*"[5] If the husband abuses this conditional permission and brutalizes his wife, her male relatives have the right to intervene and the case can be taken to the courts if it is severe enough.

5. Consequently, the intent of this beating is not inflicting pain and punishment but merely to bring the woman back to her senses and re-establish authority in the family.

CHOPPING OFF OF HEADS AND HANDS AND STONING TO DEATH

Muslim application of criminal law has often been described as Medieval Draconian laws. The application of capital punishment has been banned by the UN and the ECC.

1. Punishment in Western penology served three functions: i) Retribution (justification looking to the past – i.e. punishment, revenge); ii) Deterrence (justification looking to the future – i.e. prevention); and iii)Reformation

2. In The Report of the Departmental Committee on Corporal Punishment in England, 1938, the committee's unanimous opinion was that "corporal punishment was of no value as a deterrent and should be abolished." In 1952, in the USA, Justice Hugo Black wrote: "Retribution is no longer the dominant objective of criminal law. Reformation and rehabilitation of offenders have become important goals of criminal jurisprudence." In 1972, Justice Thurgood Marshall wrote: "Punishment for the sake of retribution is not permissible under the Eighth Amendment." In the same year, California's capital-punishment law was declared unconstitutional.[6] For some criminologists "reformation" has become synonymous with "cure". The criminal is no longer a "bad man" but a "sick man."[7] A convict needs treatment. He is genuinely ill, perhaps physically, almost certainly mentally, and psychiatrically.

3. The Abolition of the Death Penalty Act of 1965 cancelled capital punishment for murder. The Home Secretary announced on 22nd April 1970 that 172 convicted murderers had been released from prison since 1960, most of them having only served nine years or less of their statutory life sentence. Only five served 12 or more years, nine served 6 or less and one completed only 6 months.[8] These are not cases of mistaken ruling which was corrected. These were convicted murderers being let out on the public due to their good behavior in prison. Many of them killed again, only to be sentenced for a few more years.

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[4] *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 2, p. 574, no. 2137 and authenticated in *Saheeh Sunan Abee Daawood*, vol. 2, p. 402, no. 1875.
[5] *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. 7, pp. 100-101, no. 132 and *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, pp. 1485, no. 6837.
[6] *Punishment in Islamic Law*, Muhammad Saeed El Awa, p. 87.
[7] *Crime and the Penal System*, Howard Jones, 3rd Ed., London, 1965, p. 144.
[8] Ibid., p. 88.

4. Western penologists have admitted that the penal system has failed utterly in reforming and rehabilitating criminals. Petty criminals enter the system and exit as well trained hardened criminals. Society ends up paying for the crimes committed against it by being obliged to provide food, clothing and shelter for criminals.

5. In the Islaamic system, punishments are placed in three categories: i) *Hudood* : Punishments prescribed by God in a revealed text of the Qur'aan or Sunnah, the application of which is the right of God (*Haqq Allaah*). 6 offenses: drinking alcohol; theft; armed robbery; illicit sex [homosexual, pedophilia, bestiality]; sexual slander; and apostasy. In a penal context, the punishment is (a) prescribed in the public interest; (b) cannot be lightened or made heavier; and (c) after being reported to teh judge it cannotbe pardoned by either the judge, political authority, or the victim [Qur'aan, (2): 229]. ii) *Qisaas*: Retaliation. Punishment prescribed in Islaamic law for murder and injury wherein an injury of equal severity is inflicted. iii) *Ta'zeer* : Discretionary.

6. During the Ottoman administration of the Arabian peninsula *hudood* punishments were not applied. In the late 1920's the Saudi regime reintroduced them and teh crime rate fell noticeably. The *hadd* for theft up to 1970 was not implemented more than twice per year. Six months after the introduction of *Sharee'ah* in the Sudan, crime decreased by more than 40% despite President Jaffar Numeiri's release of 13,000 prisoners at the time of decreeing Islamic law because they were not sentenced under the *Sharee'ah*. Since the introduction of Islaamic law in Iran, crime has dropped significantly.

7. Retribution is obvious in *hudood* punishments from their severity and the prohibition of mediation. And retaliation in *qisaas* as Allaah said (2:179): "In retaliatory punishment there is life for you, o people of understanding, in order that you fear God." Goodheart stated in 1953: "Retribution in punishment is an expression of the community's disapproval of crime, and if this retribution is not given recognition then the disapproval may also disappear..."[9] The element of retribution – vengeance, if you will – does not make punishment cruel and unusual, it makes punishment intelligible. Leo Page wrote: "Law exists for the protection of the community. It is not necessary to show that capital punishment is an absolute preventative of murder, or even that it is the only deterrent. If it can be shown that it is more effective as a deterrent than any other punishment, then I shall be satisfied that it should be retained. To hold otherwise is surely to forget the innocent victims of murder in the interest of their murderers. And I have no doubt at all that fear of the gallows is the most powerful of all deterrents."[10]

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[9] *English Law and the Moral Law,* A.L. Goodheart, London, 1953, p. 93.
[10] *Crime and the Community*, Leo Page, London, 1937, p. 132.

MURDER

1. In the West, homicide is a crime in which the state must intervene and apply punishment. Consequently, punishment for homicide in the West became arbitrary and lacking any uniformity. Studies in the 60s showed that black Americans were sentenced to death for crimes which white Americans were only "doing time." In Islaam, homicide is considered a civil wrong (tort). It is up to those who suffered the loss (the victim's relatives) to decide on punishment or pardon. *Qisaas* may be private justice or personal revenge either by i) execution; ii) *deeyah*; or iii) complete pardon (2: 178). However, even after execution has been ordered by the court remission is possible. This principle is uniform and leaves the right to pardon in the hands of those harmed.

2. Crimes of passion will not be eliminated by the death penalty. Public execution discourages premeditated murder. Where a person knows that he or she will only have to face life imprisonment (6-9years) for murder, if caught, they will be more willing to take the chance. But, where the consequence is possible death, they will think twice or thrice before going ahead with a murder. In the West, the execution of murderers takes place in prisons it is only viewed by a few members of the press, prison officials and the family of the murderer and the murdered. Consequently, for the society at large it is only a statistic. The execution has no personal impact on the individual members of society. In the Muslim state large segments of the society are invited to view the execution so they will convey it to the rest of the society.

THEFT

The media often refers the "hacking off" of the thief's hand in order to portray the most gruesome picture possible of the implementation of Islaamic criminal law.

1. The Qur'aan prescribes amputation in Chapter 5: 38 "As for thieves, both male and female, cut off their hands as recompense for their deeds and an exemplary punishment from Allaah..." However, there are conditions under which this law is to be applied.

2. The law of amputation is not applied under the following circumstances:
   i) During times of famine or starvation. If a person steals food to prevent starvation, his hand will not be amputated. If he steals property because of the opportunity in a time of natural disaster, he is a criminal whose hand should be removed.
   ii) If a worker stole from a boss who had withheld his pay. Instead the boss would be penalized as long as the amount stolen was not more than was owed in back wages.
   iii) If the property taken was public property. For example, rugs or fittings in a mosque, or seats from public transport.
   iv) If the value of the property was less than 10 dirhams.
   v) If the item stolen was not in its proper place (i.e., it was accidentally left somewhere and thus became temptation). The professional pickpocket or burglar have made theft a way of life.

3. The right hand is surgically removed at the wrist and not hacked off by a meat cleaver or a chain saw, as media reports seem to imply. The left foot at the ankle is removed on the second occasion and on the third occasion he may be executed as incorrigible. This is law is implemented publicly for the purpose of deterrence.

MUSLIMS OPPOSE PERSONAL FREEDOMS LIKE FREE SEX

Adultery and fornication have been decriminalized in the West due to the rapidly changing moral standards. Consequently, critics of Islaam often point the finger of blame at the severe punishments assigned to them.

1. The laws regarding adultery and fornication are purely based on morality. It is a part of a system in which all acts and relationships are measured by a scale of moral evaluation. The Western moral principle of consenting adults rejects punishment in cases where there is no discernable harm to the adults involved. On the other hand, Islaam holds that adultery and fornication are crimes against society when they become public knowldege. They attack the foundations of the community; the family.

2. Proof of guilt is limited to pregnancy, confession or the testimony of four adult Muslim eye-witnesses to the act. The chances of such an act occurring publicly are very small, especially in Muslim society where PDAs (public displays of affection) are strongly discouraged. On the other hand, in the West where it is common for a man to kiss his guest's wife and his guest to kiss the man's wife, and PDAs are considered normal, the chance of public sex occurring is greater. For example, on a recent New York-London flight in the first-class section, a married man copulated with the woman sitting next to him after a few drinks. They completely ignored the protests of other passengers and the flight attendants and were both arrested on arrival in London Heathrow airport.

3. The law is primarily a deterrent as it requires four eye-witnesses for implementation. The punishment for fornication, 100 lashes might seem sufficient to cause death in many people. However, the one implementing the punishment is not allowed to raise his hand above his shoulder level. It is the embarrassment and shame to one's family and reputation which discourages people from breaking the law. The fact that the penalty is executed publicly (24: 2) clearly indicates that its goal is to protect public morality and safeguard it against corruption.

4. The goal of such punishments is the protection of the family structure which represents the foundation of the society. A society in which adultery and fornication are condoned is one in which family has little or no meaning. In fact, once adultery and fornication became decriminalized in the 60's, wife-swapping parties and orgies became country wide rages. Since that period, such practices have entered mainstream behavior at parties and no longer cause any surprise.

MUSLIMS ARE HOMOPHOBIC AND INTOLERANT

Homosexuality and lesbianism have been dubbed "alternative life-styles," "personal preference," "a natural variation," etc. in the West today. Where homosexuality was

considered an illness by the Association of Psychiatrists, it is now removed from the list and replaced by homophobia (the dislike of homosexuals and homosexuality). Consequently, Islaam and Muslims are considered intolerant and biased due to their continued opposition. Arguments in favor of tolerance to homosexuals are based on the assumption that homosexual behavior is biologically based and not merely learned from society.

1. Early opposition to homosexuality was based on the argument that such behavior was unnatural. Sodomy cannot produce children which is one of the main natural consequences of sexual relations. "Mother Nature" did not make us that way, it was argued. To counter such arguments homosexual researchers scoured the earth until they found supposed homosexual behavior among the animal kingdom. They found that the males of some species of exotic fishes of the coast of Japan imitated the behavior of females of the species in order to prevent other males from impregnating their mates, and some rare butterflies from islands of the coast of Africa also had males exhibiting female behavior during mating season, etc. However, if the animal kingdom is to be used to justify human behavior, there also exists a spider in South America, whose female is much larger than the male. When mating is complete, the female eats her mate.

2. During the 80's it was claimed that a gland in the base of the brain which is small in women and large in men was found to be small among homosexuals. However, this evidence, while seeming incontrovertible to the layman, was immediately refuted by scientists. The data was taken from cross-sections of the brains of dead adult humans whose sexual preference was identified prior to death. Consequently, the reduced size among homosexuals could have been a result of the practice and not its cause. That is, they could have been born with normal sized glands which then became small due to their deviant lifestyle.

3. Recently genetics has become the most commonly used foundation for the pro-gay argument. In 1993 Dr. Dean Hamer, a researcher at the National Cancer Institute, claimed to have discovered "the first concrete evidence that 'gay genes' really do exist." Homosexual orientation was supposedly transmitted to males on the X chromosome from the mother. Hamer's findings, published in the prestigious journal *Science*, transformed his colorless career as a government scientist into a dynamic media personality and penned his memoirs. He gave expert testimony to the Colorado Supreme Court that formed the basis of the victorious decision striking down anti-gay Proposition 2. However, a replication of his study at the University of Western Ontario failed to find any linkage whatsoever between the X chromosome and sexual orientation.[11] It was also found that Hamer's study lacked a control group; a

[11] The study looked at 40 pairs of brothers, all of whom were gay. He queried them about homosexuality among their relatives and found a preponderance of gay family members on the mother's side. When he looked at their X chromosomes, he found that 33 of the 40 pairs of gay brothers shared an area at a spot near of the chromosome. However, seven of the pairs lacked the "gay gene". Nor did research look at the proportion of heterosexual or hetero-homo brother pairs also share the genetic material at the "gay gene" location. The preponderance of homosexual relatives on the mothers' side could also have been due to the well established fact among sociologists that women know much more about their relatives than do men.

fundamental principle of scientific research. Furthermore, in June 1994, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that a junior researcher in Hamer's laboratory who assisted in the gene mapping in the homosexuality study, alleged that he selectively reported his data. She was then summarily dismissed from her post-doctoral fellowship in Hamer's lab. But a National Institutes of Health investigation substantiated her claims and gave her another position in a different lab. Though Dr. Hamer was coy abut his own sexuality in his memoirs, he later admitted in his lectures that the was gay.[12]

4. It should be noted that Islaam, in its final form, did not introduce anti-gay legislature to the world. The texts of the Torah are replete with clear condemnation of such practices.

5. The consequence of AIDS is enough to prove that homosexuality is evil and dangerous to society. The early spread of AIDS was concentrated among the homosexual community. It later spread to the heterosexual community through blood transfusions and intravenous drug usage and so-called bisexuals. And continues on a rampage among promiscuous heterosexuals.

6. Islaam considers homosexuality to be the result of a choice. It is inconceivable that God made people homosexuals then declared it a crime and prescribed punishments for it in both this life and the next. To accept such a proposition is to accept that God is unjust. Inclinations can exist within humans for a variety of natural and unnatural acts, from fornication to rape and from necrophilia to bestiality. These inclinations may come from jinn-suggestions, media influence, or even from human whisperings or direct contact. Human beings are not like robots who only do what they are programmed to do. Humans choose and God holds them responsible for their choices. Were homosexuality a product of genetic destiny, it would be unfair for God to criminalize it and punish those who practice it. Currently, some scientists are even claiming that murder is of genetic origin. To accept that would mean to excuse murderers and tolerate murder.

7. Islaam instructs parents to separate their children in their beds by the age of ten in order to avoid sexual experiences which may result from childhood experimentation. Such experiences may be reinforced by contacts in schools and through abuse from adults. Also the distinctions between male and female are strongly made in Islaamic teachings. The Prophet cursed men who imitated women and women who imitated men. The Western fashion industry is controlled by homosexuals who attempt to blur the distinction between males and females in order to make their behavior more acceptable. Consequently, men's fashion has become more feminine in style and color and women are now wearing three-piece suits, ties and hats and traditionally men's shoes. These distinctions may be relative and vary from society to society. For example, in Scotland men traditionally wear little knee-length dresses called "kilts". In Scotland it would not be considered imitation of females, but in a society where only women wear such dress it would be considered imitation.

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[12] *The Guide,* October 1995.

NO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: THOSE WHO LEAVE ISLAAM ARE EXECUTED

Objection to Islaam is often raised against the death penalty prescribed for apostasy (abandonment of religion). Since religion in Western civilization came to be looked at as a personal choice which cannot be enforced by either Church or state, to execute a person for leaving his religion would naturally seem extreme.

1. It should be kept in mind that when capital punishment for murder was abolished in the UK in 1965 it was retained for treason and piracy with violence. And it was also the legal punishment for setting fire to Her Majesty's ships and dockyards until 1971.[13] Most countries have executed its citizens for treason. Treason is an act of rebellion against the state. State secrets are given to other countries which may not be at war with the state.

2. Islaam is not merely a religion but a complete system of life. Its rules not only govern individual conduct but also shape the basic laws and public order in the Muslim state. Apostasy encourages the rejection of law and order of society. It is an act of treason against the state which would encourage rebellion among the weaker citizens.

3. One who personally abandons the faith and leaves the country would not be hunted down and assassinated. Nor would one who apostates privately and remains in the Muslim state conforming to the outward rules of the state be tracked down and executed. The practice of setting up inquisition courts to examine people's faith is not a part of Islaamic legal tradition.

4. There is no compulsion in joining Islaam. Anyone may join the religion, but it should not be taken lightly. Only those who are serious should join. The death penalty discourages those who might think to join the religion in order to undermine it from within. The apostasy law was first instituted to stop the undermining of the state. Jews in Madeenah were converting to Islaam and apostating shortly thereafter in order to destroy the confidence of newly converted Muslims (Soorah Aal 'Imraan (3): 72).

5. The death penalty is mainly for apostates who cooperate with enemies at war with the Muslim state or those who gather people against Islaam and fight against the state.

6. Western Civilization executes its citizens for giving away state secrets; something material. Islaamic law prescribes the death penalty for something far more serious. Rebellion against God is a far greater crime than rebellion against state secrets.

EXTREMIST MUSLIMS HATE MUSIC

The general impression among some ignorant Muslims is that Islaam prohibits music. However, that is not the case.

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[13] The 1971 Criminal Damage Act replaced capital punishment with life imprisonment for these offences (*Punishment in Islamic Law*, p. 87).

1. God made human nature such that it loves music, especially in the case of children. Islaamic law does not prohibit music but regulates it by banning only its harmful aspects.

2. The Prophet (°) prohibited the use of wind and stringed instruments in a well known _hadeeth_ saying, "*There will be people of my nation who will legalize fornication, the wearing of silk, drinking wine and the use of musical instruments...*"[14] He also prohibited males from listening to adult female singers saying, "*Some people from my nation will drink wine, calling it another name. Merriment will be made for them by the playing of musical instruments and the singing of adult female singers.*"[15]

3. Folk songs with acceptable content sung by males or females under the age of puberty accompanied by a hand drum (*daff*) are permissible. In fact, the Prophet (°) encouraged the participation of singing girls at weddings and festivals. Also the recitation of the Qur'aan should be done in a melodious voice as the Prophet (°) was reported to have said, "*Whoever does not sing the Qur'aan is not one of us.*"[16]

4. Wind and stringed instruments have been banned because of their captivating power. Their notes and chords evoke strong emotional attachments. For many, music becomes a source of solace and hope instead of God. When they are down, music brings them up temporarily, like a drug. The Qur'aan, the words of God filled with guidance, should play that role. A heart filled with music will not have room for God's words.

5. The voices of singing adult females are forbidden for men in order to keep the sensual atmosphere of the society at a minimum. Men are much more easily aroused than females as has been thoroughly documented by the clinical studies of Masters and Johnson. Consequently, the male voice has not been prohibited to females according to Islaamic law. Furthermore, the male voice leads the masses in formal prayers.

6. The musicians of the world represent some of the most corrupt elements in society. Suicide and drugs are rampant among them. If their music was truly beneficial it would have benefited them first and foremost.

MUSLIMS ARE EITHER TERRORISTS OR SUPPORT TERRORISM

Terrorism is defined by the American government as the threat or the use of violence to advance a political cause by individuals or groups, whether acting for or in opposition to established governmental authority, *when such actions are intended to shock, stun, or intimidate a target group wider than the immediate victims*. Actually such a general definition will include all wars of liberation from the American War of Independence to the French Revolution. The worst aspect and perhaps the most common feature of terrorism is the unleashing of violence against innocent civilians.

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[14] *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no. .

[15] *Sunan ibn Majah*, vol. , p. , no. and authenticated in *Silsilah al-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah*, vol. 1, p. 136-139, no. 90.

[16]

1. The State of Israel is the most recent example of the establishment of a state by terrorism. It was established by Jewish terrorist groups, the most infamous of which was the Stern Gang.

2. The term “Muslim terrorist” is used to label Islaam as a terrorist religion. However, it is a misnomer. When IRA bombers struck, they were not labeled as “Catholic terrorists” even though the struggle is between Catholic Ireland and Protestant Northern Ireland supported by Protestant England. Likewise, when Timothy McVeigh blew up the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995 killing 168 people, he was not labeled as a “Christian terrorist”, though he was Christian and a terrorist. In fact the “Muslim terrorist” label was attached to the activities of the PLO who were a mixture of Muslims, Christians and communists. The PLO is not, nor was it ever, a Muslim organization. It is a nationalist organization working for the establishment of a secular Palestinian state.

3. The face of terrorism can be seen in the extremist movements of Egypt. Al-Gama’a Al-Islamiya (Islamic Group) and Jihaad Movements provided shock troops for a bitter struggle with Egypt’s security forces that caused about 1,200 deaths from 1992 to 1997 but failed to topple Hosni Mubarak’s secular rule. The Gama’a claimed responsibility for the Luxor massacre of tourists in November 1997. However, in March 1997 its exiled leaders declared a unilateral truce and renounced violence. The philosophy of these movements and their program of action have been loudly condemned by leading Muslim scholars internationally as well as local Egyptian scholars.

4. The case of Algeria is somewhat more complex. However, it is sufficient to say that the Islaamic Salvation Front (F.I.S.) - which was poised to win the elections cancelled by the Algerian military - renounced violent struggle over a year ago, yet the slaughter of innocents still continues. From the beginning of the civilian slaughters, the F.I.S. disclaimed them and identified the G.I.A. as the main culprit. Recent reports indicate that the G.I.A. was created by government secret service agents to discredit the F.I.S.’s military struggle by alienating them from the masses through atrocities.

5. Islaam opposes any form of indiscriminate violence. The Qur’aan states: **“Anyone who has killed another except in retaliation, it is as if he has killed the whole of humankind.”** (32:5) There are strict rules regulating how war may be conducted. Prophet Muhammad forbade the killing of women, children, and old people and the destruction of Churches and Synagogues or farms. Of course, if women, children or the elderly bear arms they may be killed in self-defense.

JIHAAD: ANOTHER NAME FOR ISLAMIC TERRORISM

Usually translated by the Western media as “holy war” is a greatly misunderstood principle in Islaam. There is no term in Arabic which means “holy war”. War is not “holy” in Islaam it is either just or unjust.

1. The meaning of *jihaad* is “striving” or “struggle”. It is used in Islaam to refer to a variety of different efforts enjoined upon the believers. Striving to keep God and His Messenger more important than loved ones, wealth and one’s own self is the most basic form of *jihaad* prescribed on every Muslim. The Prophet said, “*No one has truly believed until Allaah and His Messenger becomes more beloved than everything.*”[17] Doing the righteous deeds prescribed by God is itself a *jihaad*. The Prophet was reported to have said, “*The best jihaad is the perfect Hajj.*”[18] On another occasion, someone asked the Prophet if he should join the *jihaad*. The Prophet responded by asking him whether his parents were still alive and when he replied that they were, he said, “*Make* jihaad *by serving them.*”[19]
2. Defending Islaam and the Muslim community is a primary aspect of the physical *jihaad* which involves taking up arms against an enemy. God states in the Qur’aan **“Permission to fight has been given to those who have been attacked because they are wronged. And indeed, Allaah is Most Powerful.”** (22:39) **“Fight in the cause of Allaah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress the limits. Indeed Allaah does not love transgressors.”** (2:190). Muslims are also enjoined to fight against tyranny. The Qur’aan states, **“Why shouldn’t you fight in the cause of Allaah and for those oppressed because they are weak. Men, women and children who cry out, ‘Our Lord! Rescue us from this town of oppressors and ”** (4:75)

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[18] *Sahih Al Bukhari*, vol. , p. , no.

[19] Ibid., vold., p. , no. .